

NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBORS

Margaret T. Applegarth



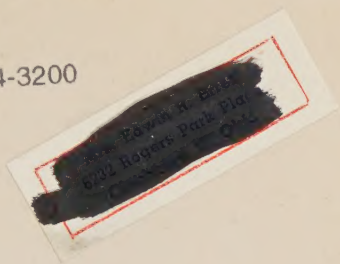
THUMBNAIL SKETCHES

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Next-Door Neighbors



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HOP O' MY THUMB IS HOPING YOU WILL LIKE ALL
THESE NEW NEXT DOOR NEIGHBORS

Next-Door Neighbors

Thumbnail Sketches from
Home Missions

By

MARGARET TYSON APPLGARTH

*Author of "Lamp-Lighters Across the Sea,"
"Jack-of-All-Trades," etc.*

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To

BERTHA D. HUBBELL

My Neighbor Round the Corner!

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These People Called Neighbors—Who Are They ?

NINETEEN hundred years ago, when the Lord was here among men, He answered this question Himself by telling of the Good Samaritan. Well as we know Luke's rendering of the story there is still a fresh significance for each of us in a certain Polish boy's quaint mispronunciation of the word Samaritan: a keynote for this book of next-door neighbors—

“Comes walking a man,—Pole maybe, I thinks. Und comes running bad mens und joomps on him. Sooner they joomps on him they makes holes all over him und he most dies. Goes the bad mens, mit his watch und his knife und his pencil-from-silver, und he most dies some more. Then comes walking proud priest. Sooner he sees the man mit holes all over him, sooner he walks away quick. Comes walking nudder man. Goes quick, also. Comes riding good *Sir American* man. Sooner he sees, out he joomps. Hoists him into his auto—gently Teacher, and runs him to-er-er—Free Dispensary, perhaps, maybe I think, und gives moneys on the Doctor. ‘Cure my neighbor quick, und so I pays you more moneys,’ he says. Und Teacher, sooner we sees anybody in troubles, he is neighbors on us, says Jesus, und we must be good *Sir Americans* on him quick.”

ON THE LOWER WEST SIDE

Oh! life is life on the lower West Side,
Just as it is on Riverside Drive.
There is love and honor and courage there,
And hatred and failure and black despair—
Mixed up, and they're mixed up everywhere—
On the lower West Side.

There is mother love on the lower West Side
More than there is on Riverside Drive.
Warm lips are pressed close to a willing breast,
And babes are in love-hungry arms caressed,
While love sings its little ones to rest—
On the lower West Side.

There's a courage fine on the lower West Side,
Just as there is on Riverside Drive.
Men meet their struggle and grip it tight,
They give red blood in their upward fight
As they climb from the blackness into the light—
On the lower West Side.

I sing these songs of the folks I know
Who never have seen a flower grow;
I sing them to you in your homes of ease,
That you may have pity and justice for these,
Your brothers and sisters who hunger and freeze—
On the lower West Side.

A. RAY PETTY.

THE JEWS

I

THE LAND OF THE POT OF GOLD

ISADORE looked at his mother critically. "Somehow," he said, much puzzled, "somehow you look all wrong."

She stared at him, surprised. "S-so?" she sighed, "and this is the sort of welcome you make on your own mother for crossing wet oceans, and for riding in the stomach of big ships, and for getting herself nearly drowned by all that too-much water, and nearly killed by all that too-much tossing? You just sit and make a bad remark on her: 'You look all wrong!' Yah! a good son you are to me—not!"

Isadore squirmed in his chair. "Didn't I send you the moneys for the trip over from Russia, my mother?" he asked, "and didn't I rent this room for us to live in? And didn't I buy that bed-from-brass and this chair with a seat-from-leather? Yah! You just smell it—isn't it real leather? To be sure it is. Did you ever have beds-from-brass and chairs-from-leather over in Russia?"

The poor old woman shook her head forlornly. It was true! She had lived in a hovel over there, with a bed—oh, well, a *very* uncertain sort of bed that collapsed at sad intervals.

Isadore laughed softly: "And I make no forgetting of the curtains at the windows—say? Were there curtains-from-white-lace in the windows in Russia? Or did the water run indoors for washings through silver pipes,—one hot, one cold?"

"No, Issy," sighed his mother, crestfallen, remembering many a winter's morning when she carried all their clothes down to the river bank, where she cracked the ice and did her laundry work through that chilly hole.

"Then," said Isadore proudly, "then I'm a real American, I am. And these are American beds-from-brass and American curtains-from-lace. So I guess I know how American ladies should look, much different from you ——"

His mother poked a finger at him, scornfully: "Tut! You! And what do you know about American ladies? Come! Are you perhaps living in the palace of the King of America with princesses to serve you?"

Isadore stood up as if he had been shot. "*King!*" he shouted, "King? America's no land for kings—listen, my mother, this is what they tell me by the night-school over at the Center: there was a man named George Washington. He wore a wig with a hair ribbon. And since his day there is no more king to rule over Americans."

His mother rocked herself in the chair-from-leather, and tittered in huge delight: "How you make words, Issy! A white wig tied with hair ribbons, eh? You can't make your old mother from Russia believe such yarns."

"But it's true," Isadore said gently, "being so new on America, how should you know everything? It is I who will tell you more, on the nights when I do not go by the Center. And with my next moneys I will buy a picture of this George Washington to hang over the bed-from-brass. There was another man, too, Abraham Lincoln. He did not wear a hair ribbon. But when he died there were no more slaves allowed. Now that was a fine thing, my mother—no more slaves. Everybody free to walk around and rule themselves. I ask you: were we free in Russia?"

"No! Issy, no!" wailed the little old woman, shuddering, hearing in her memory the clash of a soldier's gun against her door.

"Well now, seeing I am American since so many years back, I know how American women ought to look. On the street, no shawls or big ear-rings, but coats and hats on her head."

"Tut!" clucked the old peasant woman, amused once more, "now I make sure you are gabbling about princesses again."

Isadore waved his hand. "Haven't I said it *once*? Then I say it twice: no king in America, no slaves in America, no princesses in America. All free alike. I have a friend, a lady, and she will make calls on you, so you will see. Hats. Coats. Things on her hands, too. The next moneys I earn I will buy you hats and coats and gloves-from-leather. You shall see!"

"Oh, Issy!" gasped the dear old soul delightedly. Then to hide her tears she began opening the bundles

brought all the weary way from Russia—there was a precious brass candlestick to put in the middle of Isadore's pine table, bought second-hand; she had two copper pots in which to cook their meals and a gay patchwork quilt to spread over the fine bed-from-brass; you can see for yourself how that dingy room in a gloomy West Side tenement was fast becoming "Home"—a home part Russian and yet all American. But quite wonderful to the two of them, who stopped unpacking every few minutes to clasp their arms around each other's necks. For you must know that five years ago Isadore and his father had come over from Russia to earn a fortune in America.

They had said good-bye to every one with highest hopes; then, like men who follow the rainbow, they set out to find the pot of gold which every Russian knows is waiting on the streets of America for poor Jews to gather. But in five long years Isadore had never found that pot of gold; all day long he had worked in a factory, carrying things. Things too heavy for a little fellow like himself. But they needed the money, he and his father; was there not a little mother way across the sea in Russia? Not to mention the small twins, and a sister or two?

Yet after three years of working his father had been killed in a factory accident, and Isadore asked some one to write home to Russia about it—for Isadore himself could neither read nor write. Neither could his mother, but the Rabbi read the letter to her; and she wailed loudly every night because she was a widow. And she gave up all hope of seeing Isadore again.

But Isadore had no smallest doubts himself. Was he not working day and night, saving those too-slow American dimes and quarters and dollars? For two years more he looked exactly like some little gnome, some weazened queer old man with a bent back and a screwed-up face. Then we met him! Or rather, SHE met him—that wonderful Miss Missionary of ours, who saw this absurd young-old boy gazing and gazing and gazing into the window of a second-hand store where old furniture was displayed. He was gazing when she went in to pay a certain visit, near by; and half an hour later, when she came out, he was still there—gazing. You can imagine she was curious to know what could possibly fascinate a *boy* about such shabby, scratched, dilapidated furniture. So presently through his day-dream Isadore heard some one saying: “I choose the chair with the spindly legs for mine! Which do *you* choose?”

Just as if it were some sort of game that they had been playing often and often before, you know. Instead of which Isadore knew she was a perfect stranger. But that made no difference, somehow, for he answered with a most prodigious sigh: “I chooses the bed-from-brass, Liddy!”

“But what will you ever do with it?” the lady asked.

“There will be families to make sleepings on it,” Isadore exclaimed, waving his dirty hands like some magician used to summoning things out of thin air. “There will be a mother, and some twins, two sisters, and *me!*”

“Oh!” exclaimed the friendly lady, with her eyes

like stars. "I think we ought to be friends, young man! Really I do, for I live in a place called a Center where we can teach you how to make things for twins and for a little mother from Russia. Suppose you come over."

Isadore went.

He went often.

He *loved* it!

He loved every inch of that Christian Center from the roof to the cellar. He loved the games. He loved the clubs. He loved the classes. He loved the Bible stories. He loved the things he learned to make. There were not nights enough in the week for all the new things Isadore wanted to do. He suddenly loved everything American. And everything Christian, too. He even found that if you saved money in a *bank* it gathered something called "interest," and grew into more money before you knew it! If he had only known of banks long years before, his dimes and dollars could have filled his pot of gold much faster, but there had been no one to tell him anything. Policemen to keep him from loitering on street-corners, landlords to make him pay his rent, bosses to make him work harder, storekeepers to cheat him—poor, stupid Isadore; but no one on the streets of America had ever started in to make those streets the foot of the rainbow to an ugly little fellow looking for a pot of gold. No one, that is, until our missionary came along.

Do you wonder Isadore *loved* her? He told her everything. And they planned deep plans. Was his pot of gold full enough yet to send for the little

mother and the wee twins? No, she feared not. So he worked and saved, worked and saved, until one glorious day she added up his bank account. "Isadore, there's enough for the *trip*, and enough for a *bed* and a *chair* and a *table*. And I will start sewing you some curtains this very day. So write her a wonderful letter, then we will go to the post-office to send a money order."

So the little peasant woman left her home. Without the twins, however,—she could not picture Isadore adopting twins, and left them with a married daughter. But Isadore, she found, would have been equal even to *twins*; for five years had made a man of him, some one very wise about strange persons called George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. And even if America did not have pots of gold at intervals along the street, at least there were good ladies to watch out for lonely boys. She longed to see this gracious unknown lady.

You may be sure Isadore displayed her with pride. "Look, mother, look!" he cried. "See—what did I tell you? Hats on her head, coats on her back, but ear-rings and shawls, no! That's how you should look quick. I buy you things."

Miss Missionary saw a strange, unhappy look flicker in the mother's eyes. "Isadore," she suggested, "suppose you go out and shop while we talk together alone." And when he had gone the two women sat down in silence. Then the missionary said, "You must not mind his being such a staunch American boy. He wants you to be like me in the twinkling of an eye. But you must take your own

time. The *outside* of an American is nothing but a shell; the Lord God looks upon the heart."

The little Jewish mother smiled through her tears. "Ah me," she sighed, "and I was fixed to hate you with an endless hate for giving my boy such airs! But I have a love on you, Miss Hovey; you make me a big Thank-You all inside. You are his second mother."

Then Isadore came back and hung a little American flag over the door. "See, I bought our rainbow, mother!" he laughed, saluting it.

"Like all rainbows, it's a promise of better times ahead," prophesied Miss Missionary, as they all drank coffee together, made in the old samovar from Russia—at the foot of Isadore's red, white and blue rainbow.

II

MOSES AARON IN SEARCH OF A NAME

HIS mother thought his name was beautiful. More beautiful than any of her other children had, for Isaac was always being shortened up to Iky, and Rebekah Rachel to Becky; but Moses Aaron was so easy to say in one piece that nobody ever tried to shorten him up into nicknames. Perhaps there was no very good way to do it!

But Moses Aaron simply hated his name: "Moses Aaron Jacobstein," he would complain, "aw, say, everybodies can know just what I have been before they sees me—'Sheeny! Sheeny!' they calls on me!"

"You should to be ashamed," Iky said lazily; "tell them you got an uncle what has the biggest second-hand store in town! What more can they want? And ain't you got an uncle what is a rabbi, too? Say, you're hard to please." But then Isaac was almost too easily pleased; so one day Moses Aaron made up his mind that if no one else had proper pride about names he would start out and get a whole new set by himself.

You should have seen him prowling the streets and reading sign-boards. But in his part of town there were far too many other Jews, and the names on the stores were much too familiar. So he absent-mind-

edly watched a policeman out in the middle of some very lively traffic.

Suddenly he wondered what the policeman's name was, and with tremendous courage he skipped out to the little island of safety and shouted: "Say, Mister Cop, what you got in the way of a name, huh?"

You might suppose a policeman would refuse to answer any one so very small, but Pat O'Flannigan was not the top-lofty sort of person. He squinted down at the little fellow and shouted back through the uproar, "Patrick Murphy O'Flannigan, at your service, sir!" And *instantly* Moses Aaron knew his search was ended: the new name was found! O'Flannigan—what a nice mouth-filling American name, especially with Patrick and Murphy before it.

So that afternoon at the House-Around-the-Corner (our Christian Center) he went boldly up to the golden-haired lady in charge. "Please," he began, "I must make you a correction on my name. I got a different one from what you call me, and I should like to be called by it."

"Why, of course," agreed Miss Golden Hair instantly, "how horrid of me to be calling you wrong. What is it, Moses Aaron?"

Moses Aaron groaned: "Aw, don't never say that no more; Patrick Murphy O'Flannigan is the name you should to call me, so you please."

Miss Golden Hair stared. "Oh, but—but—why, Moses Aaron, that's an *Irish* name, and you aren't Irish, surely!"

Moses Aaron stood on one foot nervously. "You should to know I am *American*, and that's my Amer-

ican name. All of us is American in my family from now on and forever more."

"Then have we the names of Isaac and Rebekah Rachel correctly on our record book?" Miss Golden Hair asked, opening the big book and dipping her pen in the ink.

Now Moses Aaron was not prepared to name the rest of the family, offhand, in this sudden fashion,—but he knew it must be now or never; so in a thin, scared voice he finally heard himself saying, "You see, we got two full sets of names, and O'Flannigan is the American set. Now Iky, he ain't really Isaac at all, his American name is—er—er——" and his eyes wandered around the room in a wild sort of way until they rested on a picture on the wall, where a well-known American face gazed kindly at him, "Iky's real name is George Washington O'Flannigan."

Miss Golden Hair wrote it down very neatly and correctly in the record book, so that it seemed the easiest way in the world to stop being a Jew. Then very quietly she said, "And now, what is Rebekah Rachel's name?"

Poor Moses Aaron! He was all pins and needles, wondering what on earth to name poor Rebekah Rachel, something good enough to last forever. A frantic procession of Marys, Marthas, Ruths, Janes and Mabels scurried through his brain, but they had already been taken by somebody else at the Center, and he could not have Rebekah Rachel getting mixed up with some one undesirable. Suddenly the very plan popped into his mind and selected his two fa-

vorite flowers. "Violet Rose O'Flannigan," he said proudly, and thought it altogether beautiful.

Even Miss Golden Hair seemed impressed, for she held her handkerchief to her lips and was unable to speak! So Moses Aaron hurried home, anxious to prepare Iky and Becky for the change, so they would recognize themselves.

It was not until he was climbing the steps of the rickety tenement where the Jacobsteins lived that he began to quake in his boots. For perhaps Iky and Becky would not like it. And they didn't!

"Why for should I be George Washington O'Flannigan?" grunted Iky crossly. "Aw, say, you makes me sick!"

As for the new Violet Rose, she sniffed in disgust. "You makes me to sound like sachet powders," she complained. "I like I should rather be Rebekah Rachel. What will the father be saying when he finds you would be wishing Krisht (Christian) names on us?"

Moses Aaron was soon to find out exactly what his father felt, for very unfortunately he had met Miss Golden Hair on the street and she had said, "Good-evening, Mr. O'Flannigan."

Mr. Jacobstein bowed politely. "I makes you a correction, Lady," he begged, "you have been made a forgetting that I should to be named Mr. Jacobstein."

Miss Golden Hair flushed. "Oh, but I understood from Moses Aaron that you had all changed your names."

"What?" roared Papa Jacobstein, completely

thunderstruck. So Miss Golden Hair simply had to explain, although she now saw that poor Moses Aaron had evidently had a scheme all his own.

So presently Moses Aaron learned exactly what his father thought about having a perfectly good Jewish family turn into Patricks and Georges and Violet Roses. After a miserable half-hour Moses Aaron was sent to bed without supper, and his mother crept in to comfort him.

"This is what comes of going with Krishts, mine son," she whispered; "you should to keep away. Krishts make no good with nobody."

Moses Aaron gallantly lifted his aching head from the pillow. "I tells you somethings," he confided; "you can't for to have a mad on the Lord Jesus when all the time He's got such loving feelings on us. Nobody shan't stop me from being an American Krisht, not never!"

"Oh hush you, mine little Moses Aaron," she begged, "or Father will make you more whippings."

The next day after school Moses Aaron hurried to the House-Around-the-Corner. The Golden-haired Lady looked up, smiling. "Good-afternoon, Patrick," she said in the most matter-of-fact way.

Moses Aaron adored her for it, for he knew that *she* knew from his father that that was not his name at all. Yet she was pretending for his sake!

"I makes you a correction," he said; "you must name me Moses Aaron. My father makes me a whipping for being Patrick. But you should to know I am an American Krisht in my heart."

Miss Golden Hair placed a chair opposite hers.

"Sit down, Moses Aaron," she begged, "and let's talk about names. They really don't matter much, you know, but I honestly love yours."

"Aw say!" groaned Moses Aaron.

"But I *do*!" she insisted, "for I remember that it was Moses and Aaron who led the children of Israel away from the land where they were badly treated and unhappy into the Promised Land. It was Moses and Aaron who explained to them what the Lord God wanted them to *do* and *be* and *say*. If it hadn't been for what Moses and Aaron did, there might not have been any little town of Bethlehem where Jesus Christ would be born! There might not be ten commandments brought down from the mountain to teach us how to be safe and good; there might not be lots of other Christian things if Moses and Aaron had hated their names and disobeyed God. So I can't see why you can't just love to keep on being Moses Aaron; it's ever and ever so much finer than Patrick."

"Aw, but it shows I'm a Sheeny. I hate it!"

"But Jesus Christ was born a Jew, yet He lived so marvellously that people never stop nowadays to remember what He was, only what He *did*! Listen,—sometimes people called America the Promised Land, full of liberty and freedom and opportunities. Wouldn't you like to pretend you were another Moses appointed by God to lead your family into a happy understanding of these best things in America?"

Moses Aaron smiled. "When you says it like I was a hero, then I can to try *anything*!"

THE POLES

III

HOP-O'-MY-THUMB

AT first it had really been fun. Certainly none of them had objected to leaving their stuffy crowded room in the dingy tenement back in the noisy street. For it had been sizzling there in the hot July days. And here they were riding in a thing called a train for the first time in their lives, and a cross sort of man had paid their fare. And imagine such a long, long ride costing them nothing. That alone was pleasant. Then, after hours of riding, the Cross Man bundled them out of the train at a very small station, set in the midst of surprisingly green country. Then he crowded them into a wagon. Somebody shouted "G'dap! g'dap!" and two horses began pulling along a roadway where green trees twinkled their cool leaves at the excited family.

As usual it was Jakobaa who spoke for all the other tongue-tied brothers and sisters. "See, mutter, it looks like it did by the park that time when we went there; see—much greenness all over everything." And she waved her thin arms in a thrilly fashion.

"And it didn't cost us nothing for getting here—my, my!"

As for the littlest member of the family, he blinked at the twinkling leaves in the friendliest fashion, and meant to make up a story about them in the middle of the bouncing cart-ride, but he fell sound asleep. The next thing he knew it was time to go to work, for they reached the place where the Cross Man was bringing them. Not that this littlest member of the family was to work himself, of course, for he was only about as big as a minute—or rather two minutes at the very most. But when everybody else was starting out with shiny tin pails, he cried long and lustily because he had no pail for his very own. And the Cross Man surprisingly let him have one. I am afraid he knew that Hop-o'-My-Thumb could pick beans as well as Jakobaa or any of the others. For there was really nothing to it—hop o' my thumb, and a slender green bean-pod fell plop into the shiny tin pail. The very little fellow thought the plop had a very jolly sound, and he decided to run a race with Jakobaa to see which of them could fill a pail quicker. But, of course, her hops of the thumb were cleverer and surer than his, and he had far too dreamy a way of sitting down at the foot of the towering bean-stalk to think things over, so that his pail was not filled to the brim that first day.

But in the evening when the Cross Man weighed it he said to the proud parents, "He's one fine little picker, that boy. You keep poking him up and he'll be earning money for you, the first thing you know."

Every one laughed long and hard; they had never

dreamed that Hop-o'-My-Thumb could ever earn money. He was such a comical, dreamy little chap, about as big as a minute—well, two minutes at the most.

None of them liked their new home up in the loft of a ramshackle barn, where beds were only empty bins with sacks of hay for mattresses. Four other families slept up there, too, and because every one was tired from a hard day's work at picking beans in the broiling sun, there was much quarrelling in the air. Whereupon Hop-o'-My-Thumb cried himself to sleep. Perhaps, after all, that free ride into the country wasn't going to be all pleasure!

And the next day he was sure of it. For instead of his begging for a shiny tin pail, it was his mother who thrust it into his hands, saying, "Now hustle, little one, hustle. Pick so many beans as the big Jakobaa. Hustle, hustle!"

So he hustled! But the sun beat down on his little back and the shiny tin pail sparkled—sparkled. Hop-o'-My-Thumb looked over his shoulders to be sure that no one was looking, then he slumped wearily down beside a bean-stalk and nodded his head once—nodded it twice—nodded it three times.

Boom! boom! he seemed to be hearing giants; and then he found himself being shaken wide-awake by the Cross Man who had paid their fare to the bean-farm.

"You lazy kid, pick!" shouted this cross person. "Hurry up now, or I'll chuck you into the well to drown."

Which sounded highly unpleasant. So after that

it was Hop-o'-My-Thumb! Hop-o'-My-Thumb! Hop-o'-My-Thumb! from morning till night. And at night his parents tried to show him off to the other parents up in the barn-loft—tried to make him dance the quaint little clog-dance such as children danced away over the sea in their Old Country. Then Hop-o'-My-Thumb found that he had no proper stiffening left in his legs and back; he just crumpled up in a heap and fell asleep.

Jakobaa swooped down on him and cradled his head in her arms. "Oh, mutter," she protested, "he's too little for picking the beans."

"S-sh!" her mother hissed; "he should do very well when he's used to it."

So you are to make a little picture of them in your mind's eye picking away for dear life on a certain morning, weeks later, when an automobile came whizzing along the roadway. A Friend of Ours was driving it, and as his eye caught sight of the figures moving slowly up and down among the rows of beans, he stopped his car, saying to himself, "Um; foreigners, I see. Perhaps I'd best go and have a chat—right in my line."

So he filled his pockets with books and walked over to Jakobaa. As she said afterward, "Now wasn't it nice he picked me out of all the many other pickers?" But, as a matter of fact, anybody would pick out Jakobaa, she was so glowingly and thrillingly alive, even after hours and hours of stooping over beans in sizzling sunshine.

This Friend of Ours smiled at her and said, "Speak English, sister?"

"Sure," cried Jakobaa proudly, "me speak it just fine; but the others, not so good."

"I have a book that speaks your language," said Our Friend, reaching in his left-hand pocket. Then in her own foreign tongue, which you and I would not understand, he read these familiar words: "And Jesus said, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

Jakobaa nodded enthusiastically. "Oh, that sounds fine, mister. How I wish your Mr. Jesus could say that to me little brudder. Come, I shows you. Stoop down—see, he lie asleep there under the bean-stalk. And should the cross padrone find him—ach! he would shake him that he must go work yet once more."

"But he's far too little to work," Our Friend said sternly, and picked Hop-o'-My-Thumb up in his arms. The sleepy little fellow curled there comfortably, and never dreamed that it was almost as if the Lord Jesus Himself had walked into the field to save him. For this Friend of Ours—this man who ran an automobile and sold Bibles by the wayside, this Colporter—had made up his mind to save little Hop-o'-My-Thumb. There was a very stormy scene with the mother and father, though Jakobaa stood by pleading for Hop-o'-My-Thumb.

It seemed that the Colporter knew a good family living near by—oh, about three miles off—who would love to keep Hop-o'-My-Thumb all summer long. "For I suppose you will be here a good long time?"

"Yes," nodded Jakobaa, "we goes to tomatoes

next, and then the padrone say we must go to corn. Ach, me no like vegetables. No good! It would be more better for little brudder to make playings."

So Hop-o'-My-Thumb was taken away to the near-by Friendly Farm, where the cows mooed cheerfully to him, and the buttercups nodded to him, and on Sundays he always saw his own family, for his farmer friend would drive him over, and Jakobaa was amazed at his plump cheeks.

"He ain't so little no more," she said.

"Und say, Jaky," he gurgled contentedly, "on dat farm de flowers grows mit *colors all over dem*, from yellow, from pink, from blue; und nobody slaps you as dey does by de parks und says 'You dassn't to pick dem.' It's like it is by heaven, I guess!"

But the nicest part of the story is about the Bible which the Colporter left behind him when he took Hop-o'-My-Thumb away. On summer evenings when the weary foreign families had finished picking beans, after supper Jakobaa would spell out the Bible stories until the light of the sun disappeared and it was time to crawl up to the loft and sleep on sacks of hay. Again and again it seemed to Jakobaa as if the Lord Jesus Himself came near her as she was falling asleep, so dearly did she love the stories about Him.

Then finally the beans were all picked, and they moved to the tomato farm. Then weeks later there was corn to gather, then squashes. And after the work was all done the padrone sent them back to the city. But it was not at all the same family that had come with him early in July. For Hop-o'-My-Thumb was a chunky, talkative little person, who in-

sisted on saying his prayer every evening at his mother's knee, just as the farmer's wife had taught him.

"What nonsense is this?" thought the startled mother.

But Jakobaa loved it.

"I too will make a prayer to the Lord Jesus each evening," she said to her mother.

Whereupon the other brothers and sisters looked very much left out. So Jakobaa smiled: "See, the side of the bed is long. We will kneel side by side for this prayer, und say the words what is in our hearts."

So when our missionary came to call, she was astonished at the family. "I think," said Jakobaa, smiling, "that vegetables might be much worser, Lady! The cross padrone, he no good, but that Bible peddler—say!"

IV

"A HAT FOR THE LAUNDRESS, AND— SOMETHING ELSE!"

MRS. STANDISH had her own idea about laundresses: they were women who washed and ironed your clothes down in the cellar, they cost you \$3.60 a day, and you gave them a Christmas basket in December. That was as far as her thought about them ever went, until November, 1920, when Prissy took a hand.

For Prissy's mother "washed" for Mrs. Standish every Monday as regularly as the day came around, until one Monday when she was sick—much too sick to raise her head from the pillow. So Prissy rushed the other children off to school, and even tried to find some one to go in her mother's place to wash for Mrs. Standish; but, as all the world knows, Monday is a day when laundresses are not sitting around doing nothing—so there was no one to be found. Therefore Prissy brushed her hair neatly and wasted five minutes laboriously writing something on little pieces of paper. Over and over she did it, but it never came out right, so finally she took the best of the lot and set off for the Standish home. For a long time she had had things to say to the Lady of That House—things that could not be trusted through a telephone at a corner drug-store.

Mrs. Standish's house was the prettiest one on Pleasant Street, and as Prissy rang the door-bell she loved to think it was her own mother who kept the window curtains so white and crispy. Yet all the time her heart was pitty-patting against the yoke of her calico dress; and when the door opened she spoke to the maid in what can best be described as an “ingrowing” voice.

“I would have speech mit Mrs. Standish,” she said, bobbing her head politely, “if you should to give her my calling-card,” and she handed in her little square of ruled paper.

One regrets to state that the maid snickered at sight of its inadequacy. But Prissy looked at her sternly, saying, “Sooner she gets the card, she will to see me!” And she walked bravely indoors, as if she had come hundreds of times before.

Up-stairs, Mrs. Standish took the piece of paper and read: “Miss Priscilla Alden Sin-,” and, turning it over, found the ending on the other side: “-oski.” She carried the paper down to the library, where Prissy rose and bowed.

“My mother, she couldn't to come for washings to-day. She's got a hot all over her, but sooner I tucks her back in bed she makes sleepings. It is better so, yes?”

Mrs. Standish waved the piece of paper. “And is this your name?” she asked.

Prissy nodded. “I am too long a name to fit on one side of the card—Priscilla Alden Sinoski, I am. And I thought you should to know that we had come over, too.”

"*Come over?*" Mrs. Standish repeated, rather puzzled; "come over where?"

"Why to America!" Prissy said, "in boats, like Myles Standish done. Didn't you to remember he was among the first immigrants on America?"

"*Immigrant?*" gasped Mrs. Standish. "Why, my dear child, you're crazy! If my husband could hear you calling his ancestors immigrants——"

Prissy looked at her soothingly. "Oh, lady, it might be worser, much worser. Why, I am immigrant myself, didn't you know? You tell Mr. Standish it's all right when you get used to it. Only we come from Poland, not England."

Mrs. Standish swished her skirts. "But, my dear, we've been Americans 300 years before you ever left Poland."

Prissy clutched the arms of her chair and said the thing she had come to say: "But I am Americans, too, Mrs. Standish, und I want you should be Americans with my mother more harder. She got a big lonely sooner she goes out to do washings. All day long she is down in American cellars: she makes fine washings on American clothes und she eats American foods—but she ain't got no likings for America, und I want she should be Americans as proud as I am. All times she got only a big hate. Mrs. Standish, lady, you are the politest Americans she knows, so could you be more American mit her, please?"

Mrs. Standish simply stared. "Well, of all things!" she gasped. "What a comical child you are, Priscilla Alden Sinoski. Tell me, how did you get the first part of your name?"

Prissy sparkled like a case of lovely jewels. "Sooner I comes on America we live in a town where they got a place called a Christian Center. Come Thanksgiving Day they gives a party on everybodies in the neighborhood, und they reads a poem by a gentlemans named Longfellow, und the children were dressed up for actings the poem. Und suddenly there ain't nobody for being Priscilla. 'Where have she went?' they keep saying, und I was chose, quick! You should to see me, lady, mit a gray dress und a big white hanky round my neck like it was a shawl, und buckles-from-silver on my shoes, und a little white bonnet-from-cotton on my head. Und John Alden und Myles Standish both asked me for being their wife. *Me*, mind you! Well, I most died, from happy! So I ain't never had no lonely in America since I learnt how those first Americans was immigrants just like me, und made sailings away from their old country for finding liberty und safety just like why we left Poland. I made myself be named Priscilla Alden ever since."

"Was that in this city?" Mrs. Standish asked.

"But no," sighed Prissy, "that was before my father began dying. When he finally did it, then we comes on this here town so my big bruder could do workings in a factory. My next-to-the-big bruder, he got himself made soldier for fightings in your war, und he died. In France, that was. So my mother she don't get no likings for America like she should. For my big bruder he talk all times about moneys; but say, you should see the *kids*! We play Prissy Alden all times what I ain't working. Jan,

he's John Alden, und Nicky, he's Myles Standish. We play *coming over*—in the tub, you know; und I've learned them well that America's the land what makes immigrants into Americans, sooner they *loves* it."

Mrs. Standish found herself saying, "Priscilla, just what would you like me to do?"

Prissy beamed as if all the wishes in the world were coming true. "Oh, please, I want you should buy my mother a hat-from-velvet; here's the money all saved," and Prissy untied a corner of her handkerchief, displaying three crumpled dollar bills. "I want you should please get it a stylish hat, mit feathers to wave on top. All times she wears shawl on her head like she never get over being immigrant. Come Thanksgiving Day I have give my word how my mother und the kid should sit in your church und make thanks to God for giving us America."

"I'd love to buy the hat," Mrs. Standish assured her, "and now, surely you want something yourself."

Prissy wriggled uneasily. "It's a silly something," she sighed, "but I heard tell how your church gives a thing called a pageant come Thanksgiving Day, for to show the landing of the Pilgrims. I heard tell how the children in the Sunday-school is to make actings, und oh—oh, how I would be Prissy Alden all over again."

Mrs. Standish was embarrassed. "But, Priscilla, in a little New England town like this so many of us are actually descended from Pilgrims that this pageant is to be given only by children whose ancestors came over in the *Mayflower* —"

Prissy interrupted passionately. “But ain’t I said it, *We come over, too*, lady! We ain’t been born 300 years ago to make sailings on the *Mayflower*, but sooner we hears of America we come in a big—yes, a bigger, quicker, finer boat than the *Mayflower*, too.”

So all Mrs. Standish could do was to ask the committee about it, and a woman descended from Elder Brewster said enthusiastically, “Oh, do let’s have her! Why, she’s more American than any of us!”

And that’s how it happened that Prissy of Paradise Alley was a star in the Pilgrims’ pageant on Thanksgiving Day along with all the New England children from Pleasant Street. Mrs. Sinoski sat in the very front row, wearing her hat-from-velvet, and one could see for oneself that the “lonely” seemed to have oozed away. For she had suddenly discovered that once upon a time all these other people had been new in America, too. A little matter of 300 years’ difference in time simply did not matter, Prissy said. And surely Prissy must know, for she had been a father and a mother and a general manager to the Sinoskis for a good many years.

THE ITALIANS

V

TIPTOE TESSA GOES THROUGH THE KEYHOLE

THERE was a window. And wonderful things went on inside it. Singing and laughing. Stories, too. And the murmur of many voices all talking at once. If you were big and tall you could look right in the window to see what was happening, whereupon you hurried along saying to yourself, "Dear me, I'm late, they've begun already!"

But Tessa was so very, very little. She stood on her tiptoes and stretched out her dear little neck, but she simply—could—not—reach—high enough to squint through the glass. It was very provoking, and a lonesome frown sat on her forehead.

You might suppose that the simplest plan would be to walk right in the door, but Tiptoe Tessa was bashful. So *very* bashful that if she even *imagined* any one was looking at her, she hung her pretty little head and tried to run away. So she never even dreamed of bursting in, uninvited, among a host of unknown people in a big strange wonderful building. But one day she ventured as far as the door, and—discovered the keyhole. After which she was per-

fectly happy, for all she had to do was to wait until everybody was safely inside, then she stooped over and kept one eye at the keyhole, and watched—and watched—and watched. For a while every one stood up and sang. Then they read aloud together. Then they closed their eyes and a man on the platform talked,—his eyes were closed, too. Then little groups formed around small tables, after which there was the soft babble of voices, and laughter, and the children used colored crayons. Tiptoe Tessa saw them do it. You can see a great deal through a keyhole if you stand there long enough! And standing was one thing Tessa kept doing Sunday after Sunday until the day came around when she actually went through the keyhole. Quite suddenly, of course. For the Gentleman-Who-did-the-Talking-on-the-Platform very unexpectedly opened the door, and was astonished to have something soft and round tumble at his feet!

When he stooped down to pick it up, he discovered it was not an “it,” at all, but a very bashful little girl who tried hard to scramble to her feet and hurry away.

“Now look here,” he said, pleasantly, “you’re just the very person we need to sit on one of our empty chairs.” And to Tessa’s horror he remarked to everybody present, “Which class of girls wants a new scholar?”

Such a shouting: “We do!” “We want her!” “Oh, give her to us, Mr. Superintendent!” Tessa suddenly was the most popular girl in the room, and when she was finally seated with a class of girls her

own age the teacher explained why every one was so eager to claim her.

"The classes are having a membership contest," she said, "and none of us knows where to find new scholars. My girls have tried and tried, but so far we haven't been able to discover one single new girl anywhere."

With that, Tiptoe Tessa found her tongue. "Oh, but I wait-a outside-a the door ev-er-y week-a making a peek through-a the keyhole, listen-a to the song-a, and see-a the color-a pencil."

The teacher sighed. "Oh, my dear, and I'm afraid you've been aching to be asked inside, haven't you?"

Tessa beamed. "But I never dream-a you want-a Italiana girl in these so fine-a church! I live-a just-a round the corner."

"Really?" sighed the teacher, as if her heart were aching, "and have you brothers and sisters and cousins and neighbors who never go to Sunday-school?"

Tessa smiled. "But-a yes, Signorita, leetle and big-a, bambino and grandpater," then she began ticking them off on her fingers: "Lisabetta, Marianina, Fiametta, Constantina, Angelo and Tony, they be-long-a in my fam-ilee. But all-a the day they make-a the rose-a. You know-a how-a to make-a the rose-a, yes?"

"No," said the teacher, shaking her head, "but I would like to call on you this afternoon, then I can watch you, can't I?"

And Tessa ran home smiling with the news that there would be grand company. The seven children

looked up from the table, where they were making roses, and even the unbusiness-like bambino stopped rolling around the floor in complete astonishment. "Ah yes," said Papa Bellamonte from his bed, "how shall we have grand company in this so crowded room, with me in bed—hey? Answer me? We will not have the so fine lady, no! She shall go home. See?"

Tessa looked at her mother through tears that made the sateen roses one great pink blurr. "That lady, she is so nice! You let her come, yes?"

But Mrs. Bellamonte dipped her finger in the paste, crumpled some bits of pinkness about a wire, then strung on five petals—pasting, patting, shaping the petals into a cup-like nest, much too busy to answer the questions of a foolish idle daughter.

"Get busy," she snapped, "you run off when you should work. Look at Fiametta, she sit quiet all day. See the pile of roses she make. And Lisabetta, she beat you all hollow! Come on now, make roses, Tessa."

So Tessa pasted sateen roses on wire stems and hung them later on a cord to dry. But her heart was heavy.

Yet at half-past four there came a knock. Nobody knows to this day why that gentle knock should have pushed the door wide open, so that before she knew it Tessa's teacher stood beside the table piled with round pink rose leaves. She never dreamed she was not welcome, for her eyes were startled at the sight of seven silent children pasting some one's sateen roses. Instantly she pictured a score of Eas-

ter bonnets, gay and spring-like with these same pink rosebuds, and she whispered softly, "Dear God, help me to bring Thy Easter *here*—inside this dismal room."

And I know the Friend of Little Children heard her prayer. For the minute she reached home she told her pastor and her friends about the Bellamontes. "Think of it; just around the corner from our church. And the poor dears only receive eight cents for making *a hundred and forty-four* roses," she cried, "and those little children looked so pale and grown-up, and their father is so sick. It's terrible."

So, each in their own way, her pastor and her various friends began to help. And a poet, learning of the family, wrote a verse about them.

THE FLOWER FACTORY

"Lisabetta, Marianina, Fiametta, Teresina,
They are winding stems of roses, one by one, one by
one,
Let them have a long, long playtime,
Lord of Toil, when Toil is done.
Fill their baby hands with roses, joyous roses of
the sun."¹

But Tessa's teacher said: "Thank God we do not need to wait until they *die* to give them roses. For it's *Easter*! And Easter is a day of resurrection from the dead."

So that glorious Sunday morning when a score of spring-like bonnets bore the Bellamonte roses,

¹Published by S. S. McClure Company.

Tessa's teacher brought real roses in her arms as the chimes rang out that Christ is risen.

"See!" she called from the doorway, "a real rose for each of you."

"Ah, Signorita," Mrs. Bellamonte cried, "they have been here to tell me the good news already. To-morrow we move to the janitor's quarters in the church. And my man, say, he get well queeck now. You watch him! And the kids, I send them to school, like you tell me."

And Tessa whispered: "If I had-a not peek-a through-a that keyhole, say! then I would-a never have smell-a a real-a rose-a, maybe, perhaps!"

VI

BECAUSE OF THE KID GLOVE LADY

THAT was not her real name, of course. For she had a perfectly wonderful name of her own, and the minute you heard it you knew she was that very rich lady who lived in the beautiful house on the avenue with the shiny windows, where a really-truly butler opened and shut the front door and waited on the table. But because of a certain little thing she once did they began calling her the Kid Glove Lady, they still do it, and she likes it even better than her own name.

It all began one piping hot day when she was riding along Main Street in her glittering automobile and saw Miss Missionary trudging wearily along the sidewalk.

“Jessie!” she called, “oh, Jessie! I’ll give you a lift—get in!”

You may be sure Miss Jessie got in as quickly as possible, and gave such an enormous sigh of relief that she really felt she ought to apologize for it. “You know these hot September days make me feel a hundred years old. I’m all one great big headache! Perhaps because I didn’t get my vacation in August.”

The lady in the automobile looked at her. "Jessie, I'm going to kidnap you, and whisk you right out to my country home for over Sunday. Now don't say a word—you need a real rest away from those dirty Italians of yours, and I'm going to see that you get it. Jenkins will drive you out there, and you must forget you run a mission or have a single duty."

"Oh, but I couldn't be away over *Sunday*," gasped Miss Jessie; "you forget I run a Sunday-school. Who would do the teaching for me, I would like to know?"

"Well, why couldn't I teach it?" asked the Kid Glove Lady, on the spur of the moment; "just tell me the golden text and I'll do it. I'll do *anything* to bring a rested look back to the place where your smile is hanging around loose! And I always get my own way, you know!"

So it was settled, and Miss Missionary was whirled out to the lovely country place, while the Kid Glove Lady stayed in town and spent hours and hours staring at the Golden Text. For it seemed too queer for words: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath *clean hands* and a *pure heart*, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity nor sworn deceitfully."

The Kid Glove Lady scowled at the words! She frowned at them! She actually grew rather provoked at them!

"Of all impossible lessons for Jessie's dirty, dirty Italians. They don't even know what *clean hands* are, and she hasn't been able to make them learn after one whole year of trying. So how am I to do

it? Oh dear, oh dear! Why did I ever send Jessie away?"

So she lay awake all night, and Sunday morning she hardly ate any breakfast at all. But she put on her most becoming hat, and the chauffeur drove her down to our mission very early. For she remembered that Jessie's Italians had a habit of arriving hours before time.

It must be admitted that she made a lovely picture as she stood at the door waiting. For her hat was a dream, and her dress was wonderful, and her long white kid gloves actually gleamed. Nothing like that had ever appeared at the mission before, and the news spread like wildfire that it would be well to come to Sunday-school to-day. So every one was there.

And the Kid Glove Lady stood in the doorway shaking hands with each new arrival just as Miss Missionary herself always did. Naturally it proved far more thrilling to shake a white kid glove hand than an every-day missionary hand, so they pumped it shyly up and down, and stood around staring at her, their mouths open!

"She look-a like-a de ladies what comes out of fashion pictures," they whispered, while Catterina Cimino said spellbound, "I bet-a she's the swell millionaire, for sure!"

Finally every one had come, so they sang their opening songs very lustily. Then the Kid Glove Lady's heart began to go pitty-pat, for the lesson time was drawing near, and she still did not know how to teach it. But absent-mindedly she began pulling off

her long white gloves, and as she did so she stared and stared at them. For they were horrible to see—smutty—and mussy—and gray—and black. “Well, I never!” she gasped to herself. And everybody in that whole room saw the beautiful Kid Glove Lady looking in utter disgust at her own gloves. She kept on looking, even although lesson time had come; then suddenly she looked up and said very impressively, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath *clean hands* and a *pure heart*. . . .”

Somehow everybody present fastened his or her Italian eyes on those dirty white gloves! And everybody’s conscience began whispering, “I did it!” “I did it!” “Look here now, surely that lady’s gloves were snowy white until I shook hands with her. I dirtied her beautiful gloves myself because I forgot to wash my hands as Miss Jessie has asked me to do so often.” “Oh, I did it!” “I did it!” So one and all, they began to feel terribly ashamed.

You can see for yourself that the Kid Glove Lady had absolutely no trouble in teaching that lesson, for her silent gloves did most of the talking for her! Instead of taking them off she kept them on, holding them up so every one could notice the smuts and smears. No Sunday-school lesson ever made such a tremendous impression on them. This is the way Catterina Cimino reviewed the lesson for Miss Jessie the following Sunday: “Now you must-a know, Teacher, that clean-a hand-a is very much more nicer than dirty hand-a, for my dirty hand-a is not only keep-a me dirty, but it make-a the Kid Glove

Lady dirty, too. And there ain't no use-a de knock at-a the door-a of Heaven with dirty hand-a, for the Lord Jesus He not like-a I should-a dirty nobody."

Tony Ravello waved his hand excitedly. "Say, Teacher, she's been and left out all about-a the heart-a. Dirty heart-a cant-a get into Heaven, neither, Miss Jessie; one-a dirty heart-a make-a the others dirty ——"

Catterina broke in: "Like-a when a kid-a says swear words, it don't-a only hurt-a him, it hurt-a the leetle fella what ain't learnt-a to swear-a yet."

So to this very day Miss Jessie says the most successful thing she ever did at our mission was to take a vacation that one Sunday! The Kid Glove Lady has given her gloves to Miss Jessie, who keeps them in a desk at the mission; and once in a while when anybody new has especially dirty hands Catterina or Tony will borrow the gloves and tell about the Kid Glove Lady's visit all over again!

THE BOHEMIANS

VII

THE CALICO MOTHER'S APRON STRINGS

IT was Mothers' Day all over America, and in the Bohemian Mission the scholars had been asked to bring their mothers to Sunday-school with them; so the little room was crowded. And the Preacher, looking in at the door, exclaimed to the missionary, "What a sight! I thought you told me that *nothing* could lure these mothers from their homes?"

"Oh, as for that," she answered wistfully, "it happens so seldom! Those mothers in there—how I love every one of them, and how they are beginning to confide in me, *at last*. But do you know, they tell me that their greatest trouble comes when their boys and girls stop obeying them? It is only too true, for every once in a while a girl will say, 'Mamma, she ain't so American like me, Miss Burns, I just don't pay no attention to her no more. She don't wear no proper clothes like you, just calico, and I tells her she don't know nothing.' And only this week little Johann Strauss said, 'Say, Miss Burns, what's the use for me bein' tied to mommer's apron strings *forever*, hey?'"

"Ah!" said the Preacher, gently, "I'm glad you've told me all this. I know what to tell them now." So a little later, after several hymns and prayers, a silence fell as the Preacher stood before the room of children and their mothers; mothers who, of course, did wear the most calico of calico dresses, and whose hands were rough and red; but in their honest, loving eyes the Preacher saw a longing which their children overlooked. So this is the story he told them:

Once upon a time there was a Queen so rich and beautiful that every one turned to look at her hundred silken gowns as they cried, "Oh!" and "Ah!" Every few hours she had to change, of course: first a breakfast gown, then a garden gown, next a luncheon gown, then a gown to drive in, another for dinner, another for the court ball each evening—you can see for yourself what fun it would have been to watch her. And you might suppose she would have been the happiest person in the world instead of which she was—as blue as indigo!

Because, you see, she had three handsome sons and three pretty daughters, but not a single prince or a single princess ever did what their nurses or governesses wanted them to do; it was frowns and scowls and kicks and loud words all day, until the King and Queen were nearly frantic; for the children were a perfect nuisance to have around. When news of this behavior leaked out into the kingdom the poor subjects wagged their heads most solemnly and sighed, "Such ill-bred children ought to die!

We shudder to think of the day when such disagreeable monsters will be old enough to rule us."

Then others said: "They won't die, because they're fed too carefully and watched too thoroughly by all those guards and nurses in the palace. So if we don't want them to grow up to be our rulers, let's kill them off now, one by one."

And they plotted to do this very thing!

When news of this wicked plan reached the Queen, what did her beauty or her golden crown or her hundred silken robes matter to her then?

"Ah me!" she wept, and the tears splashed down on her purple satin gown and made little marks all over it.

But when she had cried exactly half a dozen great salt tears, behold there stood at her elbow a weazened little fairy, the kind who has grown old by continually worrying over helping other people's trouble. And this kind little creature said gently: "Tut! tut! your majesty, this is no way for a queen to spoil her royal purple gown."

The Queen blinked through her tears in surprise. "Oh, if you knew why I cry ——" she began, but the fairy interrupted: "I do know; and tears won't help at all. Has your majesty tried wearing apron strings?"

"*Apron strings!!*" gasped the startled Queen, "what an absurd suggestion to make to me, you silly fairy. How would I look wearing apron strings in court? People would laugh at me."

"Oh, no," breathed the fairy, "they would not dare to laugh. Besides, they would think it was a

new fashion you were setting, and by the next morning every storekeeper in the whole realm would be selling aprons as fast as he could take them down from the shelves. I really think that if you sent the nurses and governess away at once, and tied each little prince and princess to your apron strings, you'd soon notice a world of difference in their behavior. And it would be such a pretty fashion, the prettiest in the world, that all the sour old duchesses who hate your disagreeable children would begin smiling and smiling, until every court lady would copy you at once. *There isn't a moment to lose*, if you would save your children."

"W-e-l-l," wavered the Queen, "I might try it, but where can I get these apron strings? I'm sure the court dressmakers would faint if I ordered them offhand this way."

"Oh, as for that," smiled the fairy, "I can make you some right away." And with her little wand she touched the six salt tear-drops that had stained the purple satin gown; and from those glistening tear-drops long slender threads grew rapidly—three on one side, and three on the other.

So the Queen summoned her children, but as usual they refused to come, stamping their wayward feet and wrinkling their naughty noses, until they spied those curious gleaming strands which a fairy was weaving; then they crept nearer. And the fairy whispered: "It's the loveliest game in the world, my dears; just tie these round your hearts, then tag along with your mother, and whatever she does, you do, too."

"Oh, what a circus!" grinned the princes. "Oh, what a lark!" sang the princesses. So the Queen went into court with that little human train of six excited children trailing after her. And when she graciously shook hands with the Great High Chancellor of the realm, behold, the six small children thought it was part of their new game to shake hands, too. And the old gentleman was exceedingly pleased.

"Usually they poke out their nasty little tongues at me," he said to Mrs. Great High Chancellor that night; "my dear, why don't you buy some apron strings yourself, so each of our little High Chancellors can be tied to you? I think it would be exceedingly becoming to you."

"I thought of it myself," she admitted, "for never have I seen the Queen look so adorable as when those six wee children copied her delightful manners all night long. I'm sure the subjects do not dream how dear those children really are—oh, I wish that wicked plot were at the bottom of the sea!"

"It shall be," said the Great High Chancellor emphatically. And it was!

For the Queen's apron strings made all the difference in the world. So from that day to this all really proper children are *tied round their hearts* to their own mother's apron strings. Oh, no, you hardly ever *see* those strings: they're spun from love and tears and tenderness; but the children that are tied to them grow into splendid rulers, while the careless, rude children who cut loose from those strings are invariably spoken of like this by every

one: "I'd like to get rid of that awful child. A regular nuisance,—and so unlovable."

You may be sure each teacher, in the lesson which followed, told her class how even the great Lord Jesus had obeyed *His* mother: a brand new thought to every small Bohemian, and one which worked a miracle, I think. For shortly after this the naughty Johann Strauss went to his mother, saying: "Say, mommer, when I was awful bad on you to-day, you cried! Say, was you spinning me new apron strings from love and tears like the Sunday Preacher said?"

And his mother nodded.

VIII

ON THE WINGS OF THE DANDELION

WHEN the First Church opened their Fresh Air Farm for children from the slums in Pleasant Village that summer, Olga Robsa was among the first arrivals. All on account of seeds, that was, too: for on Easter every child in Sunday-school had been given a package of seeds to plant. And Olga, who had always dreamed of owning a growing flower *sometime*, planted her seeds in an old starch box found in the alley outside the near-by laundry. She set the box on the family window-sill opening on a dingy court, where the sun only shone for twenty little minutes any day. Two weeks later when the Church Visitor came to call, Olga had a request. "Could you do favors on me?" she asked.

"Indeed I will, my dear," the Visitor assured her; "tell me what to do."

"I wants as how you should make me a sign what reads 'KEEP OFF THE GRASS' in big words, like what it says by parks. So I puts it on my new garden. Sooner me brudder and me uncles comes back from de factory for sleeping, they makes them jokes mit my garden,—bad jokes, Leddy. They pokes at it mit fingers, und spits at it. You could to help me mit signs!"

So the Visitor printed in big black letters "Keep

Off the Grass," but she could hardly see the words, her eyes were so blurred with tears about this poor starch-box garden in a sunless window, four stories up from the cluttered courtyard. And when the Fresh Air Farm was opened Olga Robsa was among the first arrivals in June.

All up and down the village street she raced, all through the sunny fields and meadows where not a single sign said "Keep Off the Grass." She wanted no better heaven. Yet the very joy of it led her to temptation.

One day she stopped at a neighbor's on the street and told her little tale. Such a foolish unbelievable little tale that it soon spread all over the village, and then reached the ears of the First Church Visitor, herself.

"Olga, how could you?" said this Visitor, much shocked.

"Sorry," Olga squirmed, "but it won't go no further, sure!"

But the Visitor gave a sigh and said: "Dear child, I see I shall have to teach you a lesson about foolish tales like yours." And Olga's heart sank almost to her ten bare toes—for this sounded uncomfortably like bad punishment. But the Visitor pointed to a fuzzy white-headed dandelion gone to seed in the front lawn:

"I want you to pick it, Olga, then, carrying it up-right, I want you to run all the way down the street and back to me."

Olga's heart sang a little tune, for this seemed a jolly nonsensical punishment! So she picked the

dandelion and went dancing down the street with a merry hop-skip-and-a-jump, while away blew the fuzzy white seeds. When she came back to the porch her cheeks were pink and her eyes twinkling; but the Visitor's face was solemn.

"Now go back down the street, dear, and pick up every one of the seeds. Hurry!"

But Olga *couldn't* hurry—slowly she meandered across lawns and sidewalks, looking and looking and looking, but somehow those little seeds had all mysteriously disappeared. The wind must have thought it a clever game to scatter them throughout the neighborhood, for try as she might she found only *two* of the countless bits of dandelion floss.

Big salty tears rolled down her cheeks as she laid them quietly in the Visitor's lap.

"You see, Olga dear, that your story has spread all over the neighborhood as quickly and mysteriously as the dandelion wings have done, and however hard you may try you can never bring them back home again. For a word once spoken is gone forever!"

So when Olga went back to her slum, not only was her face tanned and plump, but there was a different glint in her big blue eyes. "Listen on me reciting a pome what I learnt by that Farm," she would say, until all the neighbor's children knew it quite as well as she:

"My heart is God's little garden,
And the things growing there each day,
Are the things He shall see me doing,
And the words He shall hear me say."

THE CHINESE

IX

SLANT-EYES AND PIG-TAILS

EVERYTHING about her was so very, very different, that it was no wonder Betty looked at her in utter surprise. For she had—yes really, my dears!—she had *three* pig-tails hanging down her back, THREE! And each of them was finished off with some red cotton woven in with the hairs at the ends; to make those little braids seem even longer than they really were.

Betty looked and looked, and counted and counted. Yes, there certainly were three of them. Somewhere it must be stylish to have *three*! And that was the first surprising thing about this different new girl.

The next thing was just as strange, for she certainly *was* a little girl, yet she always wore *trousers*! Sometimes blue cotton trousers with a blue cotton jacket, and sometimes—on very special occasions—green silk trousers, with a red silk jacket.

Moreover this little girl's eyes slanted up at the corners. Then, as if this wasn't enough to surprise Betty, let me add that when Betty went up and asked her why in the world she had three pig-tails and trousers, this curious child very shyly said something that sounded exactly like "S, t, u, v, w, x, y, z!"

"Is—is—that a sentence, or—or—just the alphabet?" poor Betty stammered.

Whereupon Slant-Eyes and Pig-Tails replied even more shyly: "L, m, n, o, p, q, r, s!" At least that's how it *sounded*, although it really made beautiful sense in her own language. But Betty discovered how hard it was to make friends—with sentences that sounded like A B C's.

She dug her toes into the mud, and wondered what to do next, when the mud seemed to say to her: "Mud-pies, of course!" For surely you can see what Betty at once discovered—that *mud-pies* are the same good fun in any language! So they made them all morning in the alley: little round mud-pies, little heart-shaped pies, little square ones. It was lots of fun. Then Betty found two clothes-pins and easily turned them into dolls by twisting bits of paper around them for dresses, making eyes and noses and mouths on their little round heads with a pencil. Slant-Eyes and Pig-Tails giggled and giggled, saying a great many excited sentences about them, only every sentence sounded to Betty like: "F, g, h, i, j, k, l!"

Betty had never been so altogether surprised. What was this strange child talking about, anyway?

"I know what I'll have to do," she suddenly cried, "I'll just have to teach her to talk English. It will be like playing school. See this, Slant-Eyes, well it's *mud*. Now you say it—'mud,' come on!"

"Mud!" said Slant-Eyes, dimpling all over.

"And this is a *stone*; now you say it—'stone'!"

"Stone!" repeated Slant-Eyes, giggling.

Then Betty pointed to herself: "I'm a *girl*," she said, "and you're a *girl*, too. Say that."

"Girl!" laughed Slant-Eyes.

"That's fine," praised Teacher-Betty, then pointing to mud she said: "Now, what's that called?"

"Stone!" shouted the new pupil, loudly.

"No! no! *Mud*. Now what am I?"

"Mud!" sighed the poor little pupil.

"Oh, dear," cried Betty to herself, "we aren't getting anywhere. I'll just begin all over again!"

So they played English lessons all morning long. But because you have always talked English ever since you talked anything at all, you have no least idea how hard it is to learn the strange long words of somebody else's language. But Betty tried, and Slant-Eyes tried, until one wonderful day, a week later, when she ran over to greet Betty with the smiling welcome: "Good-bye, girl! Come again!"

"Oh me, oh my!" sighed Betty, "you're all upside down, for that's the thing to say when you're *going home*, not when you're just coming. But never mind, you meant all right, and it was a real sentence. Sometime soon you're going to talk and talk and talk. Let's play store to-day, Slant-Eyes. Now this is potato—this is rice—these are beans. I'll be the storekeeper. Good-morning, madam, what can I sell you to-day?"

"Mud," cried Slant-Eyes, dimpling. For alas, alas, mud was the first word she had learned, and she used it on every occasion.

This is the side of the story as far as Betty knew it; but of course there's another side, for every little

girl has some sort of a home where she eats and sleeps, so suppose we tag along after Slant-Eyes.

Oh, what dismal alleys she goes through, what broken fences, what horrid smells! Then when we get indoors,—what rickety stairs, and what dark, dark halls. When we reach a certain door, we hurry in after Slant-Eyes, and there sits her mother, doing nothing. Just holding her own hands, doing nothing. She does it all day. For she is lonesome. She does not know anybody in town. If she goes out on the street the strange unknown noises frighten her; she cannot go into stores, because she cannot speak English; she has no books or newspapers, because she does not know how to read a single word, even in her own language. She cooks the rice for the meals; then she sits and sits and sits. Homesick. Homesick for far-away China where she used to live.

But one day her little daughter came rushing home, with smiles all over her dear yellow face.

“Kind mother,” cried this dimpling girl, speaking in the Chinese language, of course (the one that sounded like “V, w, x, y, z” to poor Betty), “kind mother, there is a celestial little American in the next alley and we play heavenly games with each other, and I learn this queer American speech most beautifully. Now listen while I tell you—for the wetness of dirt in the alley is known as mud.”

“Mud,” repeated the lonely mother.

Of course there is no time to tell you how every single word that Slant-Eyes learned, her mother finally learned, too. It took a great many playtimes, but little by little the new words became very famil-

iar and pleasant to say. Then one proud day some one knocked at the door, and the mother of Slant-Eyes called in perfect English: "Come in, thank you!"

She really should have said *please* instead of *thank you*, but that was a small mistake to our Miss Missionary, who had heard of these Chinese strangers and had come to call. She was delighted that they knew any English, at all, and invited them to come to a place called a church the next afternoon. There would be other Chinese people there.

"I come with happy foots," cried the mother of Slant-Eyes, "but what are church? Me learn much fine American words—*mud* and *girl* and *school* and *store* and *money*, but me no learn *church*?"

But Slant-Eyes had just come in and said: "Kind mother, I play 'church' with Betty all this day. It is most beautiful, for church are a place where Americans sing this nice little sing, you listen with your honorable ears,"—and she tilted back her head and sang in English:

"Jesus loves me, this I know
For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to Him belong,
They are weak, but He is strong."

"Happy! Happy!" cried the lonesome Chinese mother, for she seemed to feel right away how the church would fill up the dreadful empty days.

And of course it did. But you and I can easily see how Betty also helped by playing the spirit of America right into dear little Slant-Eyes.

X

SOTSI'S SOAP-SUDS

WHEN Sotsi first saw them she was perfectly sure they must be something good to eat, because they were white and fluffy exactly like many of the peculiar things the queer Americans often ate. So quicker than a flash she scooped up a handful and popped it into her mouth, for it seemed wise to be quick about it, as there was only one small bowl and a dozen of other children, whose stomachs were probably as hungry as hers. But never was a Chinese stomach or a Chinese mouth more completely astonished or disgusted, for the beautiful fluffiness proved an utter failure as food! She sputtered and foamed at the mouth, but the more she wriggled her mad little tongue the more suds she worked up, until all the children who had been at the mission longer laughed their wise little Chinese heads nearly off. Only Miss Missionary rushed to her sympathetically, and managed to help her remove the amazing foaminess. Which was Sotsi's first introduction to soap!

Presently when she discovered that the suds were for making bubbles, you should have seen her with her own little pipe, blowing bubbles off into space and chuckling with delight as they sailed up to the ceiling.

"Me makee! Me makee!" she would scream as each new bubble went soaring away, and then she would wail: "Oh, me losee! Me losee! Where did little bubble went?" It was all huge fun, and made Sotsi have a vast respect for the thing called soap. Indeed, it became a positive fascination for soap and everything that soap did. She asked questions galore of the other children who had been in America longer, and it seemed you were supposed to wash your dishes with soap, and your clothes with soap, and even *yourself*. This last was astonishing, for she never remembered to have had a bath, and it seemed a great waste of perfectly good soap and perfectly good water.

But one eventful day when she had been coming to our mission about ten days she made a very solemn and polite request: Would the Honorable Lady permit that she remove her unworthy garments and float in the thing called a tub with a piece of heavenly soap to make suds? The Honorable Lady permitted; and Sotsi went in and locked the door. There were horrified squealings at first, then blissful gurgles of joy. Then by and by Sotsi came out so delightfully clean that her cheeks looked like little yellow tea-roses,—the expensive kind, with just the tiniest bit of pink showing through!

Sotsi went home to show herself off, and the amusing part of it is that her own mother actually did not know her. She stared and stared at Sotsi in complete surprise, for it was, and yet it wasn't, her small daughter. But when the surprise wore off the whole family agreed it was a pleasant change, and

Mr. Wang actually parted with five cents so that they might have a cake of the "magic washer" in the house. And all because of that one little cake of soap the entire Wang family became Christians; which was the last thing in the world Mr. Wang intended to have happen, for had he not a row of little gods on the god-shelf which he worshipped every day,—little wooden gods which he had carried all the way from China to America?

But Tai Fah Min was to give a recitation which he had written all by himself, and that recitation plus the piece of soap converted them all. I am sure you know that people who give recitations in public like to appear well, and Tai Fah Min had set his heart on having a pair of American trousers, and an American coat with an American handkerchief sticking out of the pocket. Please don't let yourself be prejudiced against him because he was a boy who loved clothes; for I dare say you yourself have worried about the way your necktie was tied or the proper height for collars this season.

Unfortunately Mr. Wang simply could not be moved to give one single cent toward new clothes for the success of the recitation. Mr. Wang had black eyes that looked at you in a sleepy kind of way until you wondered whether he had heard what you said. But he had. Perfectly. It was simply his Chinese way of seeming indifferent and as if a recitation more or less meant absolutely nothing to him. Even a recitation with a prize attached,—provided it happened to be the best, of course. So Tai Fah Min was very unhappy.

But Sotsi was at the stage when she still thought soap was a remedy for any ill in life, and she looked Tai Fah Min up and down in the most thoughtful way: "As clothes, they is most miserably not; but me washee and makee clean, so you lookee more nicer, see?"

Tai Fah Min did not see how washing was to help, but Sotsi had her way, and put his clothes to soak in a marvellous mass of suds. Then her eye happened to light on the little wooden gods, and she began wondering:—if they were any good at all, surely Chinese gods would want a little Chinese boy to make the best recitation and win the prize. Surely ancestral idols might prove an even stiffer magic than American soap. So she lifted them down from the god-shelf and plunged them into the soap-suds with the cotton shirt and the trousers. She swished and swirled the idols around in the suds, she pommelled them up and down, while under her breath she kept praying in Chinese: "Honorably bless Tai Fah Min, deign to make him most glorious speaker, let him look most magnificent!" Then to make *doubly* sure, she even rubbed the little wooden gods on the shirt and trousers exactly as if they had been soap, saying a little prayer all over again.

Then she lifted Tai Fah Min's clothes out of the basin, and could hardly believe her poor dear eyes. For if they had been streaked and smutty before, then just imagine how they now looked when the dust of generations which had settled on the Wang idols was now transferred on Tai Fah Min's one and only suit of clothes, together with some scarlet paint

and some curious green powder from incense. It was as if instead of planning to wash the suit, she had actually set out to scrub the idols. For they were now peculiarly pale and wet-looking; while the suit was simply hopeless.

Sotsi sat down and wept the saltiest kind of Chinese tears; I positively dare not tell you what happened to her when Tai Fah Min saw his suit, or when Mr. Wang saw the idols. Poor Sotsi!

"Miserable female," he shouted, shaking her up and down, "you have surely brought bad luck on all of us. For years and years who of your ancestors has ever dared to wash the venerable idols, you insignificant good-for-nothing little soap-maniac!"

Which was really the tamest of all the disagreeable things that happened to Sotsi; so it is no wonder she ran away to our mission and told Miss Missionary all about it.

"Me putee too big hope in Amelican soap!" the poor child sobbed, while more salt tears rolled down her little tea-rose cheeks. But you must have noticed one nice thing about missionaries—they know exactly how to help! And Miss Missionary *boiled* Tai Fah Min's suit until all the idol stains vanished as if by magic, and he made his recitation looking altogether spick and span. Moreover the solemn judges agreed that his little speech was "written with intelligence and delivered with expressive deliberation." So he won the prize, after all:—a Bible, full of colored pictures.

He carried it home and laid it on the god-shelf

beside the pale idols. "It tells about the Amelican God," he announced.

Mr. Wang had to examine it, of course, and found the pictures so interesting that he wanted to know what they were about. Whereupon Tai Fah Min told the few Bible stories he knew, and Sotsi told the few she knew. Mr. Wang was sure these stories were not true, such a wonderful God was too much for him to believe in all at once, so he actually went to the mission to inquire into matters. And when he once began inquiring he found it hard to stop until he was altogether convinced that the Christian's God is God indeed, and that little carved idols which gathered dust on the god-shelf are absolutely useless chips of wood.

So from that day to this Sotsi has been living out the meaning of her Chinese name, "Little Great Happiness." But it took soap-suds, plus our mission, to bring the happiness to her.

THE JAPANESE

XI

INTRODUCING MISS-TEN-THOUSAND- AGES-OF-BAMBOO-GRASS

WM. EMERSON ADAMS MACDONALD was very tall and exceedingly grand-looking. Moreover he wore a high silk hat and gray kid gloves, which made him look more wonderful yet. He made the little waiting-room in the station seem smaller than usual. And the very tiny personage smoothed her blue kimono over her knees in order to look as neat as possible while waiting in the presence of any one so Absolutely Magnificent.

The train was very late in arriving. It didn't come, and it didn't come! The gentleman kept pulling his gold watch out of his pocket and scowled at it. "Oh, but it isn't the fault of his honorable watch that the miserable train comes slow," thought the very tiny person very tenderly, hating to have even a watch blamed unjustly.

With true Japanese tact she racked her polite little brain for something to distract the Absolutely Magnificent One's attention. For even at the age of ten she was motherly enough to know that if cross ba-

bies needed to be amused, then obviously even an Absolutely Magnificent Grown-Up must be made to think of something besides the one thing he couldn't possibly have. So presently if you had been in the station you would have heard an absurd little squeak: it was the small person politely clucking to call attention to herself. The tall gentleman turned his bored blue eyes upon her, and was very much startled to have this totally unknown child bow as she remarked: "Have honorable man had a pleasant Christmas with plenty suitable gift, maybe?"

"Christmas?" he frowned, "whatever made you think of *last* Christmas when this is the month of November?"

She squinted up at him through her quaint slant eyes. "Oh," she chuckled, "both been miserably quiet so very long time. So what you got Christmas?"

"Why r-r-really," he stammered, "really I can't remember. Christmas was so very long ago. What did *you* get?"

"No believe in Christmas, myself," she said, nodding her head severely, "how could? Japanese believe in Buddha, so Christmas are not holiday for lonely me. Just for Americans."

The Absolutely Magnificent One magnificently unbent and leaned toward her wagging his gray kid glove finger: "See here, young lady, you're a little heathen, and before Christmas comes around again I'll prove it. How long have you been here in America, anyway?"

"Oh, since ever and ever before," she smiled.

"You're too clear!" he laughed, "let me see if I can find out what your name is!"

"Chiyoye Sasa!" she replied, making a polite little Japanese bow the way one should on being introduced.

So although he had not meant to, he also bowed. "That's a mouthful of a name," he said. "I don't believe I can ever say it properly."

"Perhaps you like me better done over into American talk," she said quaintly, "that way my name do mean Miss Ten-Thousand-Ages-of-Bamboo-Grass."

"Never! Surely you're not all that?" he gasped, "*just you?*" (She nodded primly.) "But you're only as big as a minute and that name is yards long."

She stood up and smoothed out her kimono as straight as possible. "There is room for much Japanese grow," she giggled, "perhaps another yesterday or two and I should grow way up in the air—oh, way up, like church steeple!"

"Oh!" said the gentleman, "so you've noticed our church steeples, have you? How do you like them?"

"Not—not so well as I could to like Christmas," she admitted wistfully. "I do got big hunger inside for Christmas."

"Listen!" whispered the Magnificent One, "I'm going to feed that hunger with a Christmas tree and a stocking full of goodies. Just you wait! Where do you live, you little Ten-Thousand-Ages-of-Bamboo-Grass?" and he pulled out his note-book and pencil.

"Oh, but you couldn't to forget," she smiled, "for

I do got the same address as your honorable self. My father are waiter in the boarding-house where you do got rooms. We got home down under in the cellar. Little home like over in Japan—matting floor, no chair, no table. My mother like we do sit on floor same as in Japan and eat with chop stick. My father like we do things American way. Some day soon we do got to go to Japan some more.”

The Magnificent One looked at her astonished: “You don’t mean to say we’ve been living in the same house for months and months? Well, I never! How many are there of you? Sometimes I hear a baby crying at night, don’t I?”

“Yes, our baby, he do be getting new tooths. Then there do be three others between baby and me ——”

“Seven heathen!” said the Magnificent One softly, and it really sounded a little as if he had a special reason for being glad about it. But the train thundered in, and with hardly time to say good-bye he jumped aboard just as Chiyoye Sasa’s father was jumping off the train.

“Felicitous marriage!” bowed the polite Japanese servant.

“Oh, thank you, Ito—I’ll be back in two weeks!”

The train thundered away.

“He’s on his way to be married,” explained the little girl’s father.

“Oh, no wonder he makes most restless lookings at his watch,” smiled Miss Ten-Thousand-Ages-of-Bamboo-Grass very wisely.

* * * * *

Several hours later, in the near-by city, a certain groom was whispering to his pretty bride: "Now, my dear, you need not worry again about not going as a missionary, for I have some wonderful news for you! It seems that I've been living right on top of seven delightful heathen for months and months without knowing it. Japanese heathen who worship Buddha and don't believe in Christmas. Now isn't that something to live for?"

"Like the good old hymn:

'If you cannot cross the ocean
And the heathen land explore,
You can find the heathen nearer,
You can find them at your door.'

"Yes," he laughed, "and maybe you'll even be finding my seven special heathen peeking through the keyhole!"

"I'll love it!" she said, "and I want to know right now whether you're going to be the kind of a Sunday-school superintendent to give me one of those cunning little class rooms all my own in your school ——"

"Indeed I will," the brand new superintendent agreed, "provided you sit in it yourself with my seven little heathen, and teach them things ——"

"Why, of course," she announced, "do you suppose I'm going to let one of them go back to Japan a little heathen?"

"No," he said promptly, "I'm sure you won't."
And she didn't. Not one!

XII

LITTLE MISS WATERFALL TUMBLES DOWN

YOU might suppose that tumbling down was a specialty of waterfalls, something they did every day of their existence and thought nothing about it, because, of course, watery waterfalls have nothing to think with! But our little Miss Waterfall was entirely different: she did have something to think with, namely, a little Japanese brain simply buzzing with horrified Japanese thoughts. For she had been running, and now she was suddenly not running, but lying down right where she did not want to be. And she simply . . . could . . . not . . . get . . . up! All the little dots are to show you how she tried by wriggling and squirming to get up; but something had gone altogether wrong inside of her. So she kept on lying down. It was really the only thing to do.

And she was all alone.

So two tears played a waterfall game down her cheeks; and then two more tears followed, splashing on her kimono.

"Oh, look!" a voice cried, "that little girl has tumbled down on the ice. She is hurt." And in no time at all there was a crowd standing around; so

Miss Waterfall cried even more, because it is very unpleasant to have an audience when you are lying down and can't get up.

Then an ambulance came clanging up, and a man in white gently lifted her inside; and she went oozing along the streets as if in a dream. For she had always, always, wanted to ride in one of these delightful American jinrikishas!

Next came the hospital. And the doctor, and pain. Then she found herself lying in a bed in a room with dozens of other beds. Somebody's head poked itself out of every bed, and Miss Waterfall thought it looked very forlorn to see so many children in bed in the daytime.

Presently a crisp blue nurse came sailing along and stopped beside her: "Little girl, we want to know your name."

"O Taki San," she answered; "but Americanly it do be Miss Waterfall."

"Oh, I see," said the nurse, writing it down. "And now where do you live, so we can notify your family where you are?"

"Family is forever and ever," Miss Waterfall said, solemnly shaking her head.

"I beg your pardon!" gasped the nurse, unable to believe her ears.

"Forever and ever all gone," sighed Miss Waterfall. "Winter got most frosty, and one morning family are shiver inside kimono most miserable. Then they out somewhere; and soon so much coal and wood as can wish. But presently family must all gone forever and ever."

"Oh-h-h!" sighed the nurse, "do you mean that they died?"

"Oh, no; they walk it on their honorable foots," the little girl said promptly.

"But I don't see what in the world you mean," laughed the nurse. "I'll have to call an interne."

So he came, very white and crinkly in his starched suit, and full of questions. "Where do you live, my dear?" he began.

"Next by the green house around the corner," said Miss Waterfall.

"What corner?" he insisted.

"Why, the corner what is next by the green house; only it could to be not green, it breaks so easily," Miss Waterfall explained, amazed that any one so brisk should seem so dense.

"But surely the street has a name," he continued.

Miss Waterfall puckered up her eyebrows. "I do not can," she said finally; "it are vanish!" Then she reeled off a yard of Japanese very rapidly.

The interne looked at the nurse. And the nurse looked at him. They seemed dazed; the patients were agog with curiosity.

"Say, nurse," volunteered a little Jewish girl, "I can talk Yiddish real fast; perhaps she could understand that."

"Thank you, dear, but she's Japanese, you see."

And although they tried and tried, nobody could find out any more about the mysterious family who seemed to have "walked away on their honorable foots forever and ever"; nor could anybody locate that "green house next by the corner." There were

thousands of green-colored houses in town, and ten thousand street-corners. So the fame of little Miss Waterfall spread all through the hospital until it reached the private room of the Very Rich Important Patient. The one who had been in bed for months and months, and never seemed to care whether she lived or died. The nurses used to tell her all the news to amuse her; but nothing ever did amuse her. She just gazed at them out of her sad blue eyes until they wanted to cry.

But this new story was a little different. "Nonsense!" she said in her low, tired voice; "surely you can find out something! I know I could. Haven't you learned her father's name?"

"But she's positive she hasn't a father or a mother or an aunt or an uncle or any kind of a family. She doesn't mind not being located, you know. She likes it here."

"Nonsense!" said the Very Rich Important Patient; "I know I could find out all about her. Bring her here."

The nurse looked highly astonished. "H-h-here!" she stammered. "Are you sure you want to be troubled with her?"

"I shall like it," said the lady. "Why don't you hurry a little!"

So presently Miss Waterfall was put in a wheel-chair and trundled through the corridors from the free ward over to the expensive private rooms. It was another delightful adventure.

"This are jinrikisha more like in Japan," she smiled happily, patting the wheel-chair. Then, as

she was pushed into the room of the Very Rich Patient, she stared and stared about her.

"Are I real?" she whispered, awe-struck. "These are look like the inside of house around the corner, the house what are green," and she pointed in surprise at the lovely ferns and flowers around the room.

"You can leave us now, nurse," said the Very Rich Patient, and after she had tiptoed away, the lady said to Miss Waterfall, "Tell me about the house; is it very green?"

Miss Waterfall smiled adorably: "It are be some American joke, for it are no green at all; it are *thin*, so green plants could to show through the window! That house are all one big window; I forgot to remind that to the man what are politely ask where I live."

The lady in bed laughed and laughed. "I'm a real detective! It's near a florist's glass *greenhouse* where you live, isn't it? We can telephone all the florists in town and locate your street, I am sure. And now, what happened to that family of yours? Why did they all walk away?"

"How can tell? Blue man with buttons down his coat did come; he made pointings at the coal and wood, and then they all walk on their foots down the street."

"Oh! a policeman, wasn't it? And where were you when he arrested your family?"

Miss Waterfall leaned over confidentially: "I do be kneeling behind screen and are make prayer on your American God to keep me safe."

"God!" said the lady sadly. "So you believe there is a God?"

"Oh, for sure!" cried Miss Waterfall. "Aren't He bring me away from that police? I makes runnings, then slip on ice, so here I are where no police can't found me. God are wonderful. American God, I mean. Japanese god are no good. He are wood and sits all days on little shelf. He no got help for nobody. American God quite differently."

And that was the strange, queer way that an amazing thing happened here in our Christian America. For, as day followed day, that little Japanese girl taught this beautiful rich American lady to believe in God. She had lived such a busy worldly life, gadding around to party after party, having a good time, that she had never taken even one hour in all her life to think about God. But I expect He must have spent a great deal of time thinking about her; for finally, when she became very sick, too tired to live, He picked out the quaint little Japanese girl to bring back smiles to her lips and peace to her heart which had always been so empty.

No doubt you are wondering where Miss Waterfall ever learned about God herself. And that is where you and I come in. For Miss Waterfall's mother was converted in a mission, years ago, and the only prayer Miss Waterfall ever learned was "Now I lay me down to sleep,"—in Japanese, of course.

The whole family went back to Japan for several years, then returned to America, where the poor little mother died of influenza soon after landing. But

Miss Waterfall never forgot about God, in spite of the fact that her father and her uncles laughed to see her kneel to pray. She knew God was not laughing! In all America, He seemed the only friend she had, for her family kept moving and moving from city to city and from house to house, until it was no wonder she never knew where she lived. She did know, though, that the thing they did for a living was wicked, and that they were afraid of the police.

One day, soon after that, the Very Rich Patient sat up in bed. Before long she sat in a chair. And one wonderful Thursday morning she took Miss Waterfall home with her in an automobile. It was like a fairy-story come true. Only the Very Rich Lady insisted that Miss Waterfall was the fairy who had brought the richest gifts—health and love and God; while Miss Waterfall always insisted it was the other way round: “Oh, you is the fairy, for sure! Are I not go school and make readings from books? God are give you to me when I are most lonesomes!”

They found the dear Mrs. Missionary who had been such a friend to Miss Waterfall’s mother; and the nicest things for Japanese children began creeping into that mission—cunning little chairs just the right height for little bits of tots, lovely pictures for the walls, games for rainy days, and flowers to grow on the window-sill. I am sure you can guess where they came from. For, as Miss Waterfall herself said, “All we must do now is to live happily ever after.”

THE NEGROES

XIII

BROWN BETTY AND THE CHOCOLATE BABY

THE Chocolate Baby held out his little chocolate hands and yelled as only chocolate babies can yell at seeing their chocolate brownness suddenly iced with little flecks of icy whiteness floating straight down from heaven,—such an *awfully* unexpected thing for heaven to do! He couldn't help let heaven hear—and earth, too—his howling disapproval.

Whereupon Brown Betty (how I do hope you aren't imagining her a *pudding*) rushed outdoors and took the Chocolate Baby in her arms. "Oh, honey chile," she whispered, "it ain't gwine ter hurt you; it's jest the little new thing called snow, what we never done see down South in Dixie. It won't hurt you one mite, honey."

But the Chocolate Baby had had no experience with snow, and he intended to let it know from the very beginning that it wasn't welcome to fall on him. Brown Betty jiggled him in her arms so fast that the howl was broken up into queer choppy sounds, and when he grew a little less noisy she whispered in

his ear: "Snow ain't nothing that's gwine ter hurt anybody, you little scairt baby, you! Why, snow ain't nothing but fedders from little angels' wings. Yes, sir, them little angels goes a-sailing round the golden streets of hebben, and 'pears like jest naturally their little bits of fedders won't stick on properly—down they falls on you and me. Now angels is the onliest friends we've got left way up North here, honey, and I s'pect they let the fluffy fedders drop down specially for you and me to play with. Yes, sir. And they'd be powerful disappointed to hear you howling."

The Chocolate Baby listened with half an ear, and then he sobbed in queer jerky sentences that he didn't "like fedders in the air, fedders dat am cold."

That was true, of course, and Brown Betty racked her little brain for some other story—a better one. "Quit your yelling, you little darky, you! And I'll tell you how Saint Peter makes the snow. Yes, sir; that nice good Saint Peter. Why ain't you never heard tell how he wrote some of them books in the Bible; well, he did, and I reckon mebbe when he sits at the gate up in hebben he's got a powerful lot of time hanging loose on his hands; tending gates couldn't keep nobody busy *all* the time, so he writes an' he writes an' he writes. Then every oncet in a while he tears up what he writes and chucks it in the waste-basket. Why, yes, honey! Sure God's got a waste-basket in hebben; course He has. And the first thing you know, it gets full up, and Saint Peter he jest empties it down on us. And while them little specks of paper is floating down they gets colder

and colder, and turns into snow, because they don't like leaving hebben. For hebben's a powerful pleasant place to live, honey chile. Pleasanter nor coming North like you and I done."

The Chocolate Baby's sobs were getting fewer and farther between, for he certainly loved Brown Betty's stories; and just because this one showed signs of stopping, he deliberately started up again. Howling came much too easy to him! And poor Brown Betty could never quite tell which howl was made up, and which was genuine. But this present howl sounded very real indeed, for she thought it quite possible that he was actually startled by the snow. Certainly it was a curious thing to see for the first time in your whole little life.

Then suddenly she knew the very story that would sound convincing. "Now hold back your tears, honey chile, and I'll tell you what snow really is. It's *ice-cream*, honey. Yes, sir! That's what it is. I s'pect it's somebody's birthday up in hebben, some little angel's, mebbe; and the other angels is giving him a party, and there is actually more ice-cream than they need to go round. Yes, sir, all them little cherubims and seraphims has more than they can swallow, so the cook he jest drops the rest of the ice-cream down for you and me. Jest like the white folks done down South in Dixie: 'Here's some left-over cream, little darky,' they would call. So jest poke out your tongue and taste it, honey. Ain't it good?"

And they stood with their nice red tongues poked out—way, way out, tasting and tasting this ice-cream sent from heaven.

"Nuffin' much to taste," sighed the Chocolate Baby finally, when his poor little tongue ached at its very roots from tasting so hard. "They're stingy with their sugar, Betty."

Mercy! Brown Betty wrinkled her dear brown forehead. It would never do to call the angels stingy. So she fell back on an old promise she had made over and over since they came up North. "Now looky here, you little cry-baby, you. I'se gwine ter tie you to the porch and leave you here by your lonesome while I goes back to work, and if you'se powerful good and quiet, then I'se sure gwine to fetch you a little white folk's baby to play with. Yes, sir, a little white baby with blue eyes. So mind you're quiet, honey."

And he was quiet, patiently tasting tasteless snow all afternoon, held by the wonderful promise of a little white playmate. But alas! It was the same old disappointing story: Brown Betty never fetched that baby after all. Which was the reason why the Chocolate Baby absolutely refused to be good or quiet or nice all the following day.

"I wants a little white baby," he yelled over and over and over, in piercing yells, until Brown Betty wondered if, in the whole wide world of little girls, there was one who had such problems as hers: all the housework for the boarders to be done by evening, all the washing of their clothes, while mammy was off working, as well as all the care of this troublesome Chocolate Baby, with never a white baby anywhere in the neighborhood to be borrowed.

And then, out of a clear sky, the white baby came

tumbling down, not all in one piece, you understand, but in millions of separate pieces called snow. And Brown Betty rolled the snow into arms and legs, and stuck them in a nice round snow body, with a little round snow head at the top, and two bits of blue paper for eyes—until it became as nice a white playmate as any Chocolate Baby could desire. He rolled his astonished eyes until nothing but the whites showed.

“O—!” he gasped, “it’s a little ice-cream baby. Did them angels send it down from hebben?”

“I reckon that’s jest what they done, honey chile,” said Betty quietly, for surely it was angels who put it into her head to make the little baby out of snow. So she tied him to the porch, and all day there was never a cry nor a whimper. He just talked and talked to his ice-cream baby.

And it was there that Miss Missionary saw him as she was passing by. Saw him kiss the snow lips and chuckle: “Powerful cold mouth, you poor li’l’ ice-cream baby, you!” You may be sure Miss Missionary opened the wicket gate and went inside the yard to make friends. The Chocolate Baby proved easy to become acquainted with; in ten minutes she found out how the dear good angels had let the ice-cream baby fall from heaven to be his special playmate, because he had to be alone all day while Betty slaved indoors. Brown Betty herself came shyly out of the kitchen, and Miss Missionary saw at a glance that she was too little to be such a maid-of-all-work.

“You ought to be in school, my dear; you’re nothing but a baby yourself!”

"I reckon I'm dreadful little for my age, but I'm the onliest gal my mammy's got, so I jest *has* to work!"

But you and I thought differently. You and I and our mothers and fathers, and the other people in our church. We knew all along there were going to be Brown Betties and Chocolate Babies coming North to our town, so we built a house called a Negro Community Center. And we put Miss Missionary in charge to change everything for girls like little Brown Betty; for the first thing you knew, Miss Missionary had persuaded Mammy Chloe that the North was very different from the South, and that Betty really must go to school. So she did. And the Chocolate Baby spent his mornings and afternoons at the Baby Nursery at the Center, while his mammy worked. His mammy and her boarders liked that Center: they liked the concerts in the evenings, and the classes and the clubs. Brown Betty liked them, too. So did the boys, her brothers.

They were so much happier, they hardly seemed like the same family. And every once in a while Brown Betty chuckles and says if it hadn't been for the ice-cream baby maybe Miss Missionary would never have come into their front yard. But you and I know better. The thing that worries me is that there are towns and towns and towns without a single Christian Center, and there are other Brown Betties and other Chocolate Babies, lonesome, fretful, friendless—*what shall we do about it?* You and I?

XIV

THE GHOST AROUND THE CORNER

ONCE upon a time there were twenty sheets. And the twenty sheets belonged on twenty beds in twenty different homes, but there came a certain evening on the last day in October when those twenty sheets were carried to church, and were draped around twenty little boys and girls. Some of the boys wore false faces, and made horrible noises down in their throats. And some of the girls carried Jack-o'-lanterns, but they also made dreadful noises in their throats, so that there were suddenly twenty ghosts spooking around the building in the most mysterious way. But none of them were afraid of one another, because they knew it was just a Hallowe'en party, and that to-morrow they would be ordinary boys and girls again.

But poor little Black Joe did not know a thing about this party or about what kind of ghosts these particular ghosts were. All he knew was that about seven o'clock he was hurrying home in the dark from the store where he helped deliver packages, when *mercy* sakes, he saw a spook! Yes, sir, as plain as day he saw that spook ooze around the corner in its silent spooky way, then making a rattling

sound in its throat it swished inside the door of the big dark church.

"Oh, Lord," prayed little Black Joe, his heart beating like a trip-hammer, "Oh, Lord, I done seed a ghost, and I reckon I'se gwine ter die! Oh, Lord, I'se done been a drefful bad li'l' boy, but won't you save me jest this onct? Amen!"

But no sooner had he opened his eyes, than there was *another* ghost close beside him. He tried to run—oh, surely nobody ever tried to run so hard before, but he seemed rooted to the ground as trees are rooted; all the "go" was absolutely gone from his feet!

"Oh, please, Lord," he started to pray again, when this new ghost came nearer yet and ripped away his little false face, and pulled off his spooky sheet, and behold! there stood a little boy as black as Black Joe himself.

"Now look a-here, you poor darcy," said the ex-ghost cheerfully, "I'se powerful sorry I done scart you so. For this here is jest a party, and I don't see why you shouldn't be a ghost yourself. It sure am good fun. Supposing we be twin ghosts, you and me; we'll wind this here sheet 'round the both of us, then we'll groan—oh, *won't* we groan? So come along!"

And Black Joe went along. For you can't be scared of a little negro boy who is exactly as black as you are, one who has twinkling eyes and wants to play ghost with you. It was great fun being spooks under one sheet, and long before they wanted to stop, a voice from the church doorway called:

"Boys! Boys! Come in now—the games are beginning."

And would you believe it? But ghosts sprang out from every shadow, and trooped obediently indoors, where there were tubs full of apples to be bobbed for.

You should have seen Black Joe duck his head right into the tub—he'd bite an apple before any one else, he boasted. And he did! So the teacher started to praise him for it, then suddenly found she didn't know him at all. Indeed, she said she thought she had never even laid eyes on him before, had she?

"No, ma'am," he acknowledged, in a very meek and timid voice, "I'm jest *pretending* to be a reg-galer ghost."

"Oh," she laughed, "why don't you join and be a regular one from now on?"

"Could I?" he beamed, "could I? oh, hallelujah!"

So he joined, and she wrote his name and address in a book; but he never quite knew *what* he had joined because the party itself kept going on and on. So he played as he had never dreamed of playing before. Then the big lights were put out, and only the candles in the Jack-o'-lanterns were left to grin at the twenty-one ghosts while they gobbled ice-cream and cake.

It was a wonderful party. But it stopped promptly at nine o'clock. He went home to bed the happiest boy in town.

Then the next evening when he reached home his mother said to him: "Say, you little Black Joe, you!

Why ain't you telling your mammy about joining centers and churches and all such things as that? Land sakes! who should come walking in on me, this very day, but a lady with a lily-white card for me to sign, and then I hears how you done been to a Hallowe'en party and joined a Center."

"Oh, say now, mammy, I was aiming to tell you all about it, but ——" and here poor little Black Joe broke down.

"Now, honey chile, I allows there ain't nothing wrong in what you done. 'Cause why, I've joined, too! Yes, sir, me and pappy, we've both signed up. And Seraphina she's signed, and all the little pic-caninnies, too! And say, honey, I reckon there weren't never a white lady so nice and understanding as this here white lady of yours. For it seems that that there church of hers is run by white folks *for* black folks like you and me. Yes, sir, they heard tell how many of us negroes has come up North just recently, so they built this house on purpose for us to use on week-days. And it's just around the corner. Sakes alive, but I'm glad you joined, honey boy, 'cause now we can all be friends with somebody in this strange new city. Old man Lonesome, he won't sit on our doorstep no more!"

All of which is what that ghost around the corner did for little Black Joe. And it's one of the ways that Christians have of making their House-with-a-Steeple walk right into negro homes, both in your town and my town, and other towns, too.

THE MOUNTAINEERS

XV

SISSY SUNBONNET AND BUDDY BAREFOOT

CARRYING a pail of water from the brook, Bud and Sissy trudged up-hill for all the world like

“ Jack and Jill
Went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water.”

Only instead of this particular Jill falling down and breaking her crown, she merely stopped stock-still and said to Buddy Barefoot: “ For the land sakes, if we-uns ain’t got a caller! See—there’s a stranger in the cornfield a-talkin’ with pappy. I reckon maybe he’s plumb lost his road up here in our mountings.”

“ Dunno,” said Buddy Barefoot, “ reckon puts me in mind of him as come along year before last ——”

“ Uh-huh,” nodded Sookie, “ that man as aimed to get us all plumb sot on leavin’ these here mountings and goin’ down to his mill town to work in cotton factories? I ain’t forgot that man, nor how our neighbors were powerful took up with all the fine promises he give them, but I reckon Samanthy ain’t so perky ’bout cotton factories, not since she was fetched back to the mountings.”

"No," sighed Buddy sadly, "in them cotton factories I've heard tell the air's full of flecks of lint what forever tickles in your nose and chokes you and fust thing you know on, you's *sick* ——"

"That's how Samantha got took so bad. She says as how she stood all day penned in little narrow lanes of clanging, banging shuttles, she lays you needs about a hundred eyes and hands to look and leap and reach and tie them broken threads. She lays you don't dream of all the trouble that goes to make calico dresses. No, I reckon pappy won't take up with stranger folks again."

But just then their father spied them shyly hiding in the bushes. "Halloo!" he shouted, "you-uns come along here, Bud and Sissy!"

Unwillingly they walked to meet the stranger. "This here is all the kids I got, mister, and I reckon if you-uns can cram book-larnin' in 'em, me and mammy won't fetch no objections."

The stranger smiled. "Bud and Sookie look quite puzzled, so let me explain that I'm a missionary sent up here in the mountains to persuade the girls and boys in these log cabins to come down into the valley to attend a mission school. To learn to read and write, you know, and how to farm so that your crops will be double what your father ever raised."

Sookie shook her head: "I reckon I'll stay put in these here mountings. We had some neighbors onct plumb sot on goin' down to the valley, fetched there by grand promises—but Samantha she took sick with coughing, and Tenessee he's awful poorly, too."

"Besides," said Buddy Barefoot, "I figger these

here cornfields ain't never goin' to fetch no bigger crops than pappy gets."

But the stranger talked and talked. He even stayed to supper and helped mammy cook the hunks of bacon on the open hearth. "It's this way," he explained to her, "a boy who's lived in God's great clean outdoors has the best sort of a beginning. There's no telling what he might become. Suppose he should some day be president of these United States?"

Buddy's mother sat back on her heels and pointed with the frying pan at Buddy: "What? *Him*—president? Do tell!"

"Why not?" asked the stranger, and told of Abraham Lincoln, another Kentucky boy who lived in just such a poor log cabin with just such a father, farming hopeless acres of rocks and barren fields.

"I reckon I've heard tell of this here Abe Lincoln afore," said pappy; "he fetched up at the White House down in Washington, they tells me."

"He did!" the stranger said, "but he's not the only log cabin boy to become famous. Ever hear of Andrew Jackson, born in a log hut in North Carolina, reared in the pinewoods? Ever hear of James K. Polk and James Buchanan and James A. Garfield? Every one of them log cabin boys, reared in wilderness homes like this, as poor as Buddy. My friends, if all these men could rise from hopeless poverty to rule so wisely over other men, then it was due to studying day and night."

"I reckon you're hitting the nail on the head," said pappy, smoking his corn-cob pipe.

"Look-a-here," said Sookie, "this here school you-uns cracks up so grand, it ain't no factory, be it? No place like where Samanthy and a lot of mountain children weaves cotton till they nearly dies? Bud nor me ain't aimin' to be fetch into no prison, mister."

"My dear," the stranger said, "haven't I made it clear that this is God's school, a Christian place where every teacher loves the Bible? Come now, here's a Bible—did you ever see one before?"

Mammy reached out and laid a work-worn finger on it piously. "Do tell!" she gasped, "so that's a Bible. I reckon they ain't never seed one, stranger, bein' as I never seed one afore myself. Pappy, I reckon we better sends the children down the mountings to that there valley school. I reckon, pappy, if we got a president a-livin' in this here cabin we had ought to give him his book larnin' right off; 'twould be plumb foolish not to take this chanct."

"I reckon the old woman's said it, mister," pappy nodded. "We-uns will leave him go."

Buddy merely gasped: "Say, leave me hold that Bible in me hand, mister. Sissy, do you reckon I'll be readin' this myself come next-a-year?"

Sookie sniffed disdainfully. "I'll maybe not be chose a *president*," she said, "but I reckon I'll be readin' that there Book as quick as you, Bud Bare-foot. I'm aimin' to get schoolin' there myself."

"Come on," said Buddy graciously.

XVI

LILIES OF THE VALLEY

(Reported by a Senior Who Was Present)

YOU will never quite understand what Mrs. Thayer did for all of us mountaineer girls until I explain how we voted—yes, actually *voted!*—of our own free will, to go without an Easter vacation and stay on at school. Even the older girls felt just the same as Sookie and Samantha—little first-year pupils who share my room. They came tumbling in excitedly after the vote was taken.

“Well,” cried Sookie, “ain’t we said it’s a right smart piece to walk over the mountings back to home? I reckon my mammy’s spoilin’ to see me, but it’s plumb foolish not to stay here for Easter.”

How Samantha laughed! “You-uns talks like you’d been gettin’ book-larnin’ since you wuz knee-high-to-a-grasshopper! This bein’ March, Sookie, I recollect only last November seein’ you in a calico sunbonnet walkin’ over those there mountings to this here school, side by side with me, fetchin’ your shoes in your hand to save wearin’ them!”

Sookie frowned. “Looky-here, Samantha, I ain’t ashamed of my faded sunbonnets nor my homespun duds nor my old shoes which are the onliest shoes

my mammy's ever owned; and I reckon you needn't put on airs—you-uns has a log cabin jest as ramshackle nor mine: only two beds to go around among the hull eight of you! *I know!* So I tell you plain, I'm pinin' to stay put in this here school to hear that famous preacher-person from Noo York, what's his name? The one what's jest been gettin' hisself married. Samanthy, I reckon *she* comes, too, all rigged up in stylish clothes special for Easter,—oh, it's plumb foolish to miss her!"

Well, Easter came, and we passed the day gossiping mildly about the famous Dr. Anselm Kennedy Thayer. No doubt you yourself know all there is to tell, for everybody everywhere swarms to hear him preach, and although he used to be a bachelor for years-on-end, he had suddenly married quite a plain person, according to fleeting glimpses we had of her as they both drove up to Prexy's house that Sunday noon. Slender and dark she was, but not dashing or any of the other things we thought such a prominent, handsome man ought to have annexed—little ninnies that we were at that particular moment!

Nobody knows to this day what Mrs. Prexy served at her dinner, but verging on four-fifteen o'clock her chief guest suddenly became so ill that any thought of having the poor man speak in chapel was banished for *this* Easter! According to Clementina (she is Prexy's next-to-the-youngest child) Dr. Thayer simply said: "Mary, you speak in my place; I know you can!" Mary being the new wife, of course. Clementina says her father was so tremendously relieved at having the situation thus

saved that neither he nor Mrs. Prexy nor anybody else noticed the stricken startled look that descended on the bride's face. But Clementina noticed. Trust *her*! She's like the old Jews, not a jot nor a tittle doth she ever overlook.

Clementina says she (Mrs. Thayer, that is) walked out into their garden and stood by the sun-dial for almost half an hour, twisting her fingers until the knuckles showed white. Then by and by, just as the chapel chimes were calling us, along toddled Prexy's youngest hopeful, carrying a bulb. "I brang you a lily," he piped up politely and with horrible grammar added, "but the lily ain't came outdoors yet. You see, she ain't got waked up inside properly."

And as the great preacher's wife took the bulb in her hand all the paleness left her cheeks. Clementina declares it was as if angels had rolled away a stone. I don't know about *that*—but anyhow, there we all sat in prim rows in the chapel pews, and the afternoon sun filtered through the glass windows as we saw Prexy lead her up on the platform. She sat in the great carved cathedral chair with tall Easter lilies all around her, while we sang, "Low in the grave He lay, Jesus my Saviour," also other Easter hymns. And all the time we were thinking, "No, she certainly isn't much to look at!"

Then Prexy introduced her, and we eyed her gown critically as she stood there, slender as the lilies themselves in that radiant light, with the gold organ pipes gleaming behind her. And every single nasty little one of us was thinking, "She's plumb *plain*, for sure!"

She laid her folded hands on the carved pulpit desk, and this is what she said: "All my life I have wanted to be very beautiful, so beautiful that people would turn on the street to look at me,—I wonder if you know what I mean, any of you?"

Know? Good gracious! Why, it was exactly what I was wishing myself! Only of course I mentally added, "But I reckon I'm prettier than you this minute!" And afterwards the other girls said they were thinking the very same thing, too.

Without realizing it, I can see now that we must have all been won over by that first remark of hers, each of us understanding how she must hate being plain! When she had us at this stage she opened her folded hands and showed us the bulb, telling us what Prexy's son had said: "I brang you a lily bulb—but the lily ain't came outdoors yet. You see, she ain't got waked up inside properly."

"And *that's* the only reason I'm not beautiful yet, myself," she added, quoting whimsically, "'You see, *I ain't got waked up inside properly!*'"

Well, you could have rolled me over with a straw I was so astonished—and interested. Nobody in chapel had ever held us so spellbound; even gnarled old Prexy looked transfixed. So on top of this strange introduction, with a clear, mellow voice, she began reading us all of that marvellous fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Wave upon wave of sadness surged over me, it suddenly sounded so exquisite. I can't quote much that she said after that—not being a born reporter—but she kept holding that ugly bulb in her hand all the time as she read and reread one

of the verses describing Christ: "A root out of dry ground—he hath no form nor comeliness—yet when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him." "Beauty" was His because inside He had awakened—out of the ugly root, this flawless loveliness; and she quoted "The Crystal Christ" by Sidney Lanier. Curious it was, too, for we had had that poem in English class some weeks before, and nobody thrilled. Yet now ——!

Then with quick sketches she began telling us of girls, ugly, uninteresting, cramped girls—mere brown bulbs. One of them Mary Lyon, a poor, little creature in clothes so awkward and poor that they looked like a bran sack tied around the middle with a string; yet, because she waked up, Mt. Holyoke College stands as a memorial to her for what she has done for women to the ends of the earth.

There was another dull drab girl, cramped by threadbare poverty and continual sickness, fighting consumption and a hundred other obstacles, until there waked up in Alice Freeman Palmer beauty so strong and powerful than it could *make* Wellesley College. And an old farmer's wife said: "When I met her on the hill one afternoon she was the fairest object in the landscape, and all the day was brighter after I saw her. I cut her picture out of the newspaper and pasted it up where I could see it, and every day I say I will try to be a better woman because she lived."

With rapid word pictures she took us all around the world, into little mud huts somewhere in the Orient where a quaint little brown woman would

be crouching over a smoky fire, but when she looked up in greeting—behold, the beauty of holiness dwelt in her eyes! India, China, Africa, America, everywhere, brown homeliness was becoming lovely.

Then she told of a forlorn little New York gutter-snipe, clutching something secretly inside his coat.

“Whatcher got?” asked a curious pal.

“I got a bottle of perfume,” the little fellow whispered back in an ecstasy of joy.

“Aw, go on! I don’t believe ya! Take the cork out, buddy, and leave me have a smell!”

“And so,” ended Mrs. Thayer, her face like a resurrection angel’s, “when they tell me you mountaineer girls are cold and unresponsive I always say, ‘Oh, but I don’t believe it, just take the cork out: there’ll be sweet perfume there—just smell, and see!’ It is a mere matter of bulbs again, the beauty is there, but it hasn’t waked up yet. So to every one of us the Master is saying to-day as He said to the daughter of Jairus: ‘Get up, little girl, get up!’”

Then Prexy prayed as if he knew God was unusually near by; after which we all trooped up front to shake hands with her, one by one. But it wasn’t until after supper that we exchanged confidences about this and discovered that every blessed one of us had begun as follows: “Oh, Mrs. Thayer, if I can ever be half as beautiful as you are!”

For suddenly we knew we were nothing but awkward, clumsy bulbs, wrapped up in crazy, crackly layers of outer flimsiness. It was indeed high time we began to—consider the lilies! Lilies of the Appalachian valleys!

THE INDIANS

XVII

LITTLE SQUAW LAUGHS-AT-THE-SKY

NOT an Indian in all that tribe had ever received a letter, so the missionary-woman's mail was just one more surprising thing about her. Suddenly from unknown places hidden way across the desert would come a square of whiteness, all sealed up, with a red stamp in the corner and some scrawls in the center. And the white woman would smile all over her tired white face as she tore the envelope open. "A letter, he heap good medicine," the people said, and more than anything else in the whole wide world little Squaw Laughs-at-the-Sky wished for a letter all her own some day. Oh, the vast importance of it! You shall hear how finally her dream came true, but meanwhile I must tell you of a letter which came at Thanksgiving time with such delightful news that our missionary lady simply *had* to share, and naturally chose Laughs-at-the-Sky, who was a friendly little soul, with a pleasant fashion of arriving early at the mission to get everything ready and of staying late to straighten things back properly. Surely such devotion merited a secret!

So the day the splendid letter came the missionary whispered: "Be sure to stay after school for I have

something special, dear." All day she waited with grim Indian patience, until finally she heard the splendid news from the white woman's letter that a certain barrel was on its way to their reservation, a barrel crammed full of everything desirable for a big Christmas celebration, sent by the missionary's church far away across the many deserts. It had crept into their hearts how alone she must be feeling, one white person in the midst of all the red men, so the ladies in the church and the children in the Sunday-school had brought things and brought things and *brought* things! There seemed to be no end to the list of articles that church had sent: one class of little girls had made two dozen work-bags and filled them full of spools of silk, thimbles and pincushions; another class had dressed a dozen dolls with dresses that unbuttoned in a very grown-up fashion; a class of boys had saved sufficient money to buy more toys than they had dreamed of getting; and besides all this there were aprons for the women and neckties for the men, and candy for everybody. Do you wonder that the missionary had to share such unexpected news?

"But above everything else, Laughs-at-the-Sky, we must keep it a dead secret, you and I! Not another soul must know of it, you understand?"

"Oh, yes," smiled the beaming child, and scampered to her wigwam to dream sweet dreams of coming glory. But in the morning—well, how shall I tell it? But she thought how important she might seem if she simply *intimated* that she knew a splendid secret! And she said to Tinkling Beads: "Heap

fine secrets in my head," and she knocked her little fingers on her forehead.

"Tinkling Beads, she keep it plenty secret, too," begged Tinkling Beads, imploringly.

So underneath a lonely pine tree Laughs-at-the-Sky told every word of the dead secret, and made Tinkling Beads promise not to tell any one else.

But after Tinkling Beads had also dreamed sweet dreams of Christmas, she longed to seem important in the eyes of Many Feathers, so she told him in dead secrecy about the splendid barrel. He, too, promised not to tell, but before he knew it he had told Black Clouds, and presently Black Clouds told Swift-Foot-upon-the-Plain, until you can see for yourself how the secret was spreading and spreading until it was hardly a secret at all, any more! But the missionary never dreamed how it was being whispered, although poor Laughs-at-the-Sky was trembling very uneasily—was this secret NEVER going to stop going the rounds?

Day followed day, and night followed night until December twenty-first had come, and the missionary was decidedly uneasy,—*for the barrel had not yet arrived!*

"Only four more days," she groaned to Laughs-at-the-Sky. "But luckily, even if it shouldn't come, no one will be the wiser except you and my disappointed self! We'll just have carols and recitations, and no one need ever know about the gifts that never came."

Cold chills rippled up and down the spine of Laughs-at-the-Sky. Oh! Oh! Oh! If Miss

Missionary only knew how many Indian hands were already pretending to finger the promised presents. Should she tell what an unfortunate blunder she had made? But no, she could not bear to think of those blue eyes filled with new reproachful glances. So she kept silent, while her eyes were always on the desert watching for the arrival of a barrel. And at night she prayed a prayer to the Lord God, as follows: "Me plenty scared of Christmas, God; me heap need that white man's barrel. Red man, he all ready for that barrel. You send it on quick feet. Amen."

But the twenty-third came and passed, and the twenty-fourth was half-way over when behold, the barrel came. Delightfully heavy! Miss Missionary could hardly wait to get the top off, she was so eager to unpack it. Little did she guess why Laughs-at-the-Sky was late arriving, for the much-relieved child was saying to the people: "God send that heap fine barrel for to-morrow." When the good news had travelled far and wide, she hurried to the mission-house and opening the kitchen door, stumbled in upon a tragic sight: the floor was covered with small oblong packages, but Miss Missionary's head was on a chair, and she crying as if her dear good heart was breaking.

"Oh, Woman-with-the-Sunset-Hair," soothed little Laughs-at-the-Sky, "heap bad tears, me no like. What makes 'em?"

The missionary dried her eyes and said tragically: "Dear child, you're such a comfort. Imagine how crushed I felt to find that this entire barrel is full of

soap—just plain every-day soap, and not *one* other thing! Oh, I couldn't believe my eyes at first, and I dumped everything out of the barrel quickly, hoping there was something else. But it was all soap! Whatever shall I do? Oh, I had *counted* on those presents!"

Laughs-at-the-Sky picked up one of the oblong packages and unwrapped the paper covering. She sniffed at the white cake inside and wrinkled her dear little nose approvingly. "Plenty good smell," she smiled, "heap fine Christmas present."

The missionary looked at her in complete surprise. "What! Aren't you disappointed? You really think soap will make a good present?"

Laughs-at-the-Sky bravely gulped down the marble lump that seemed to be sticking forlornly in the very middle of her throat. "Plenty fine present," she answered, with a cheerful smile.

Miss Missionary sat back on her heels and stared at the Indian girl admiringly. "Behold a living proverb of the wise King Solomon—'*A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.*' If you can be stoical and brave, so can I. Somehow or other we will have to make soap seem the most desirable Christmas gift in the whole world, dear. So attractive that every red hand will long to carry a piece home. Now let me see! Let me see!"

And she began thinking of her school days and college days, when, in the twinkling of an eye, the girls used to get up little plays and clever entertainments. "The very thing!" she whispered to herself, at last, and spent the rest of the day planning

the surprise which was to make soap the great desire of every Indian.

Meanwhile Laughs-at-the-Sky quietly spread the news that an entirely different barrel had arrived, that the Woman-with-the-Sunset-Hair had feared they would be disappointed, but that actually it was a most delicious barrel full of—well, she could not tell them *what!* But they would like it.

So long before the proper hour on Christmas Day the mission-house was packed to its very doors, and the Indians, big and little, grunted with delight to see the Christmas tree all looped and strung with popcorn and gold stars and twinkling candles. They liked the carols, they liked the recitations, but excitement reached top notch when their missionary was led on the platform by an old Indian squaw who blindfolded her and tied her hands.

“Ha! Ha!” taunted this old person, wickedly, “now I’ll put you through the seven tests, and if you fail to meet even one of them you shall eat no food this day. For I warn you that seven Indians of this tribe are making footprints towards your wigwam even now, to ask for seven different kinds of Christmas presents. But unless you can satisfy all seven of their wants by *one* present then you must stay blindfolded for a week, oh Woman-with-the-Sunset-Hair, and eat no food. Can you agree to this test?”

“I agree!” nodded the missionary, and the Indians nudged each other and grunted in dismay. The foolish woman!

Then one by one seven persons stalked on the plat-

form. First came a squaw with a papoose strapped on her back. "Oh Woman-with-the-Sunset-Hair," she begged, "have you a little canoe to float in water for my papoose to play with—for this is all he wants for Christmas?"

Second came old Chief Black Clouds, who said forlornly: "See my pipe is empty; I only wish for something to smoke in it!"

Third came another squaw leading a very little boy. "Woman-with-the-Sunset Hair, my son wants a ball to toss in the air—and that is all he wants for Christmas."

Fourth was a little girl. "Oh, Wondrous-Squaw-Filled-Full-of-Wisdom, I am a stupid child in school, so all I want for Christmas is something to help me learn my A B C's."

Next came an older boy with a pencil. "All I want for Christmas is paper to draw pictures on."

Sixth came a pretty squaw, her arms full of soiled clothes. "All I need for Christmas is new lovely clothes."

Seventh came a very muddy, dirty boy. "All I need for Christmas is something to make me clean again!"

You really should have heard those startled Indians groan in sympathy with the missionary's sad test! For could any *one* thing possibly be a canoe, something to smoke, a ball, an A B C primer, paper, something to make old calico new or to make a muddy boy clean again? Of course it was impossible!

Yet the White One calmly said: "Yes, I can meet

your seven tests. Unbind my hands and uncover my eyes and I will show you!" Grunts of sheer delight rippled over the audience.

Then Miss Missionary reached in her pocket and pulled out a cake of Ivory soap. "Behold, this will meet your every test. See, I will prove it!" Unwrapping the soap *she floated it in a basin of water*. "First squaw, behold a Christmas *canoe* for your wee papoose! As for you, great Chief Black Clouds, here is something new for you to smoke in your pipe," and she lathered the soap into puffy suds, then took a clay pipe and blew through it. "Watch out, young brave, for here is the *ball* you wanted to play with!" And through the clay pipe she blew off a lovely soap bubble. It floated through the room and every Indian gasped delightedly: "Heap pretty! Heap pretty!"

Then the missionary dried the cake of soap and said: "As for you, small maid who wished an alphabet, here are five of your A B C's printed on the whiteness—I-V-O-R-Y—on this side, and on the other side many more letters—P-R-O-C-T-O-R, etc. See?"

Loud and long the Indians laughed.

"And you, brave artist, here is paper for your picture, the paper in which the soap was wrapped. While you, poor squaw, with old soiled calico, look while I wash it in these suds and make the calico as fresh as new. And you, poor muddy boy, come here, for soap will make you clean once more."

When once these seven tests were made all that

remained to Miss Missionary was to step to the edge of the platform with her cake of soap. "Is there any Indian who would like this soap which has so many uses?"

"Me!" "Me!" "Me heap want that soap!" All over the house their voices called, rather excitedly, too, for what was *one* piece of whiteness among so many? Each one of them feared that they might be disappointed, and the children called: "Tinkling Beads, she want that white canoe to float in water," or "Straight Arrow, he want that ball to throw up in the air." In the midst of all this hubbub, lo and behold! in came Laughs-at-the-Sky dragging a large basket with a cake of soap for every Indian present, big or little. The smellings that they gave that soap! The delighted sniffs. "Good medicine!" they cried. "Heap thank you, Woman-with-the-Sunset-Hair."

So the day closed happily.

And four days later came the other barrel full of all the promised toys and dolls. No one but the express company somewhere along the line will ever know why the two barrels could not have arrived together. But certain it is that that whole tribe loves soap to-day! They rub and scrub and scour with soap, and our missionary smiles to herself and often says to Laughs-at-the-Sky, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine. Learn to use odds and ends, my dear, and the Lord will always send a blessing."

XVIII

OUTSIDE THE GATES

DEACON IRON SHIRT looked at his granddaughter silently and wagged his poor old Indian head perplexedly. Things were certainly going wrong with this new day and generation! For here was one ordinary little Indian maiden acting like some squaw of twice her years, bossing every one within sound of her voice, and putting on airs enough for twenty braves with tomahawks. The very papoose lifted up his voice and wailed when she began suggesting this and that about his diet and a daily thing called baths. Did he not know how his old granny often bathed him in the summer-time, heating the water inside her mouth before squirting it all over him! Surely that was bad enough, without these new suggestions. He was relieved indeed when his squaw-mother strapped his cradle on her back and marched off with him to gather firewood, muttering under her breath against the little tyrant.

Yet in every Indian tepee they were holding spell-bound pow-wows to discuss this little girl! All because she had been chosen by the missionary out of all their tribe the year before to attend a city school and had just returned brimful of new ideas about the

wide, wide world, and disgusted with the primitive old tepee life. Around many a little fire the Indians clustered to hear her tell of cities where wigwams reared themselves up higher in the air than clouds; where water ran in silver pipes clear up to the roof so every one could wash at any time of day or night; where no one walked from place to place on their two feet but rode luxuriously in things called "autos," or, cheaper yet, in things called "street-cars." As for churches, they were no clumsy cobblestone affairs, built helter-skelter in a home-made way like that upon *their* Indian reservation—in cities, churches were vast buildings with cushioned seats as soft as clouds and the music swelled from giant pipes of gleaming gold. And as for cooking, it was done in decent pots on decent kitchen stoves, indoors, not out-of-doors in queer old kettles blackened by the open fires. And in cities people ate their meals with knives and forks. Oh, there was no end to all the things which she had learned in one short year in that town of Arizona.

"She one heap fine girl," sighed all the jealous maidens.

"She got one plenty good idea about herself," sighed the braves. But Deacon Iron Shirt kept *his* opinion to himself, merely saying, "That new Big Chief of this whole place, Big Chief Harding, did you see him?"

"Oh yes, my yes!" cried Small Ankles, indifferently. "I know him very well indeed. What else do you suppose, living in such a big place?"

"She one heap friend with Big Chief Harding,"

was whispered like chain lightning from mouth to mouth. But Deacon Iron Shirt kept silent, though presently he said: "As for that chief whose foot was on the war-path, General Pershing, did you sit down in peace with him in the big city, too?"

"Yes," yawned poor Small Ankles, bored to death, "he was around most of the time, of course." And several Indian braves who had fought in France with Pershing asked her questions which she was hard put to it to answer, but she kept it up, although these were the biggest boastings that she made; the rest were smaller, less important little tales, proving always, though, how she had been a friend of all the finest folks in town.

Then one day old Deacon Iron Shirt put on his spectacles, the ones the missionary gave him years ago, and he unwrapped his precious leather Book of Heaven.

"Small Ankles," he said slowly, "you keep such heap fine company here on earth, you sure be one heap unhappy up in heaven some day, just stand around outside the gates forever with plenty no good Injuns."

"*Outside the gates?*" gasped Small Ankles, "surely I need never stay outside of heaven. Why should I?"

"You may be heap fine squaw, but old Iron Shirt he read in God's Great Book of Heaven how up there you earn bad company. See?"

She watched him peering through his glasses, thumbing over the dear pages which he knew almost by heart until in Revelation, the twenty-second chap-

ter, he pointed out these verses which she read with frightened heart:

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates into the City. For without are dogs, sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and *whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.*"

"O-o-oh!" gasped Small Ankles in a small, meek tone, "I never knew I was that kind of a person. O-o-oh!"

Old Deacon Iron Shirt spoke kindly. "Heap hard work to walk upon the Jesus-Road when one little squaw she pave it with bad boastings. God's missionary-man, he live in that same town with you, Small Ankles, and he tell old Iron Shirt about plenty things. So Iron Shirt, he too wise to be fooled. All day he sit and picture how one small wise maiden she could lead her tribe along the Jesus-Road, so he ask God to show him a sign-post to guide Small Ankles. Look!"

And Small Ankles read in the book of Psalms the motto which she followed all the rest of her life upon that Indian reservation:

"Let the *words of my mouth* and the *meditations of my heart* be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my strength and my redeemer."

THE ALASKANS

XIX

AN ODOR OF A SWEET SMELL

SNUGGLED down in his little fur suit, all that you could possibly see of Muki was a small red nose and two sleepy, blinking eyes—they blinked because the snow was simply dazzling, and because for half an hour he had been staring at his father's totem pole, that "wooden family tree" of theirs, where ravens, bears, and eagles were grinning night and day, to show the world which animals were his parents' totems—"guardian spirits," as of course you know. And it really looked as if Muki might have still been staring if it had not been for the Lady-in-the-Box, who instantly began altering everything in town the minute the sound of her voice came floating out over the frosty air.

Muki rushed to the spot at once, and with his own eyes saw what a very small box it was, yet such a very loud-voiced lady was evidently cooped up inside it! She was a most obliging creature, for whenever the White Man fed her something on a round black plate she would sing and sing and sing! Muki promptly decided that she must be the White Man's wife, and he fell to wondering what it was that she ate off the black plate which made her desire to sing

—had he ever known another woman who ate then sang so piercingly? No doubt there might even be whole tribes of these “boxed wives” down south where men came from; he puzzled his Eskimo brain to find out how, in such cramped quarters, these wives prepared the fur for winter suits, or scraped the blubber from great whales’ interiors, or even cooked the smallest salmon . . . a hundred curious questions hopped around beneath his furry hood during all the White Man’s sermon.

Then, when every one was straggling homeward, Muki edged up to the stranger, saying shyly, “Are you going to let your wife out now, perhaps?”

“Let *who* out?” cried the White Man, much bewildered. “I have no wife, dear lad, so what could I let her out of?”

“Oh!” cried the upsidedown-est boy in all Alaska. “Oh, I thought it was your wife that lived inside the box, the one that sings so loudly.”

You never saw a missionary laugh so very hard! “You poor, dear, topsy-turvy little chap, nobody *lives* inside my box; it’s something called a phonograph.” And he explained about the mechanism and the round black records and the little needle. Muki listened carefully, then fingered the great red horn which looked so very like the mouth of some giant salmon. “Is this her ear? Or perhaps her mouth?” he inquired, awestruck. So explanations had to be made all over again.

Finally Muki sighed, *convinced*. “Well,” he sighed, “are there any other magic things as strange as this?”

"Indeed there are," the missionary said; "here, Muki, is a Bible, the most wonderful of all; for, would you believe it? This is the God of Heaven's voice telling you in your own tongue exactly how He hopes that you will live."

"Make Him speak to me," said Muki, with his eyes like saucers.

"My boy, to hear Him speak you must learn to read, which means coming to the school I open here to-morrow. Will you come?"

Needless to say, nothing could keep Muki away from any place so full of wonders. And in the course of time he came to read the Eskimo New Testament. Oh, I wish that there were time to tell about the making of that Bible years ago, of the men who tried as best they could to make it talk directly to the hearts of ice-bound frozen people, people who had never seen the lilies Jesus mentioned, who knew nothing about sheep or shepherds:—for instance, with true insight they decided to translate the phrase, "Behold the Lamb of God" to read "Behold God's Little Seal," for those tender, soft-eyed creatures of the North were as well-beloved by every Eskimo as lambs are loved by you and me.

Muki loved his Bible stories dearly, and took them so very much to heart that when the few new Christians were about to build a church of God in that small seacoast town, Muki felt that he, too, must contribute something very precious in exchange for his new happiness—did not the Bible plainly state: "It is more blessed to give than to receive"?

But the trouble was that Muki was so dreadfully

poor. There was nothing he *could* give, except, of course, the old fur suit which he must wear day in and day out, and even night-times, too! Naturally the suit could not be parted with. So as the Sunday for the great church offering dawned, Muki rather frantically decided that the only gift he had to give to God was—his breakfast. And when I tell you that his family only had one meal a day, you will see how very much in earnest he was to be willing to deliberately starve in order to help build God's house.

Indeed, the whole collection that morning was a most peculiar one: a fur-clad man arose and said he had no money, but would gladly give twelve days to chopping timber for God's church. Another man said he would spend a week in nailing up those timbers. A wrinkled granny gave a splendid piece of fur which she herself had chewed, Alaskan fashion, until the pelt was soft and pliable. A mother with a baby snuggled in the hood of her fur suit, gave the teeth of several walruses her husband had just landed. And as they made their offerings the missionary said a Bible verse appropriate to each.

So in the course of time Muki also walked up front, clutching in his hand his breakfast and his dinner and his supper—just one small dried piece of fish this was, which seemed to the missionary to smell unusually strong and very nauseating, but as Muki laid it reverently on the round collection plate the missionary understood all Muki's great unselfishness and repeated the very choicest verse of all—"An odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing unto God."

XX

LITTLE NORTHERN LIGHTS, OR WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CHRISTMAS CANDLES

ONCE upon a time there was a House of a Thousand Christmas Trees—imagine! Yet alas, alas, not one tree in all that thousand had ever been dressed up with Christmas candles or had had a single Christmas star to twinkle at its topmost tip. And no little child around those trees had ever had a single Christmas gift or heard a single Christmas carol. For what are a thousand Christmas trees in places where the story of the Babe of Bethlehem has not been told? No wonder that December twenty-fifth was exactly like the twenty-fourth or twenty-sixth, or that Christmas trees grew up undecorated.

But once upon that very same time when there was the House of a Thousand Christmas Trees, there was also a missionary sent into that village of Alaska, and no sooner had she moved into that house and seen her thousand pine trees than she dreamed a certain dream. A dream so very urgent that she wrote home to her parents in the United States as follows:

“BELOVED AND FAR-AWAY FAMILY:

“Like nice old Cæsar, I have at last ‘veni, vidi, vici,’ by which I mean—I came, I saw, I con-

quered (not the neighbors yet, oh no, but my own great loneliness!). For my little new log cabin was plain as a pipe-stem until I trimmed it up with those yards of jolly cretonnes you insisted on my putting in my trunk. So I look like never-ending summer-time indoors; while *outside* I am surrounded by a thousand empty Christmas trees that have not yet been taught their job in life, namely, to help me tell these heathen Eskimos the love of Jesus Christ. So I have already selected one little love of a tree—just four feet high it stands, every needle shined and perky for December twenty-fifth, waiting for some tinsel and some candles and some stars. So please trot right down-town, Beloved Dears, and rummage in the Five-and-Ten-Cent-Store, then send me dozens of the things I ought to have.

“My heathen neighbors are the dearest most *afraid* persons you can imagine. Their fear of evil spirits in the air and snow and forests is the greatest pity; everywhere I go I see quaint offerings hanging here and there to please these naughty demons. But yesterday I had an even greater shock, for little Miss Sea Gull came to call on me and I asked her to stay to dinner. One of my Eskimo helpers had just brought me a bear steak, so I cooked it to share with my small visitor. But alas, after we had eaten it, I mentioned what it was, and the poor child nearly wept her head off. ‘*I have eaten a friend! I have eaten a friend!*’ she wailed. ‘Whatever do you mean?’ I asked, whereupon she explained that bears were her family’s totem—had I never noticed a bear carved on top of her father’s totem pole? Well?

Then wasn't it sheer wickedness to go eating bear meat when the friendly spirits of the bear watch out for us, the only helpful spirits her poor family had? etc., etc.

"I lost no time in telling of the Friend of Little Children, and I hope the Lord Jesus may soon become more real to her than wooden totems on a pole. Meanwhile I have no doubt she was severely punished by her parents for eating a 'near-relative-of-theirs.' Oh, you dear, fearless Christians-back-home, do send me my box of Christmas trimmings soon. Good-bye."

You may be sure the next boat sailing to Alaska bore a box full to the brim of everything desirable, so that when December twenty-fourth came round only nine hundred and ninety-nine of those one thousand pine trees stood outside a small log cabin, for the thousandth tree was indoors—all shimmering with silver tinsel and gay with sixty little colored candles.

There are no locks on the doors of small log cabins in Alaska, so early Christmas morning when our missionary was hurrying round the village to remind the people of her Christmas celebration in the evening, five little girls could easily walk right indoors and stand admiring all the wonders of that secret tree. "Ah!" they cried, and "Oh!" and "Um-m-m!" as well as other tokens of delight. Then one of them tiptoed nearer and touched a Christmas candle, a pale pink Christmas candle which looked far too inviting, as if—yes, *as if it really might be very good*

to eat! Greatly daring, she nibbled daintily. "Um-m-m!" she cried, "good *tallow!*"

"Oh!" sighed the other four girls wistfully, watching her eat that one pink candle as you and I eat sticks of colored candy. And then—how shall I tell it?—but those other envious little maidens simply had to have a candle, too! "Um-m-m!" they murmured blissfully, and swallowed one apiece. But what is one small candle? So greedily they chewed up *two* apiece—then four—then six—and half an hour later when the missionary walked into her parlor her little tree was empty of its candles . . . just the silver tinsel gleamed and glistened at her.

"Where, oh, where have my candles gone?" she wondered anxiously. But although she hunted high and hunted low not a candle could be found. Then suddenly the real truth dawned on her—her Eskimos loved tallow, which was almost meat and drink to them, so the dainty bits of colored tallow had no doubt proved a great temptation to some little unknown guests who entered in her absence. She laughed, then cried a little, too. "I have so much to learn," she whispered to herself.

That evening, when the neighbors crowded her log cabin to the very doors, she ended the little entertainment by telling of mankind's First Christmas Candle—that Babe of Bethlehem who in later years said of Himself: "I am the light of the world," adding also: "*Ye* are the light of the world."

So in her careful loving way she explained that the *spirit* of each person is the candle of the Lord, and He expects us each to shine. "And this new

shining," she added, "will be our Christmas gift to Him who sent the light to all who walk in darkness."

* * * * *

Five little fur-clad Eskimos came hand in hand to see her the next morning. "We ate God's Christmas candles," they confessed, their heads hung down in shame.

"Eating is my greatest sin, dear Teacher," sighed Sea Gull, tearfully, "for did I not eat up my friend the bear?—and now, oh me! oh my! I even ate—the light of the world! Oh, Teacher, is there nothing left to make a Christian shining?"

"Yes, dear," that missionary answered softly, "I know that God has surely chosen *you* to be His special little Northern Light to shine in this dark midnight village."

"Can't we shine, too?" the others whispered bashfully, and I'm wondering—could anything wiser have happened to those Christmas candles?

THE LATIN-AMERICANS

XXI

MINUS ONE!

IF ever a little girl wanted to do something, that little girl was Catarina; and since she only wanted to go to Sunday-school, you may be surprised that she was not allowed to go, especially as she was perfectly well, the weather was clear and sunshiny, and the Sunday-school was being held only a very little distance away. Right out under the shadow of a great palm tree. Catarina could see the boys and girls gathering, she could see the teacher hanging the picture scroll against the tree trunk.

“Oh, madre mia,” she begged, “I pray thee let me go just for a little while. See, I have been twice already and it has never hurt me; let me go to-day!”

But the truth of the matter was that Catarina’s mother hated Sunday-schools. “No, no, Catarina, it is not safe to go. Something in my bones tells me those stories will upset our family. So run away, child, thou art in the way when there is cooking.”

So two big tears dripped sadly from Catarina’s eyes as she went out into the sunshine, where her father was sitting, lazily sunning his toes, and blinking his eyes open and shut, open and shut. And the

first thing she knew Catarina was telling him how heart-broken she was and he was saying: "Come now, am I not thy father? Then run along and listen to the stories, little one. Yes, go *ten* times, until thou hast a new story for every one of thy ten fingers."

So Catarina lost not a moment in skipping over to the crowd of boys and girls under the palm tree, where she listened with all her ears. Catarina's mother did not like it, but her father said cheerfully: "Oh, well, she wants to, so let her go!"

So Sunday after Sunday Catarina went, until she had been nine times. It was exactly as if she had a Bible right at the tips of her nine fingers, for she named a new finger every Sunday, and now only the tenth finger was empty, waiting—waiting for the next new story. But, oh dear me, there came a sad Thursday when her family moved to a distant village, which looked exactly like the old one, only—can you guess? *There was no Sunday-school.*

Catarina asked all her little new neighbors, but not a single child in all that town had ever heard of such a thing. So Catarina told them what it was: how there had to be a teacher, and this teacher would hang a picture against a tree trunk, and tell stories about the pictures. "I that speak unto you know *nine* of those stories, myself!" Catarina said proudly, "see—nine!" And she held up her two hands and wiggled every one of her fingers except the tenth.

"Then tell *us* the stories," begged the little new neighbors, "oh, do tell us! Let's have this thing called a Sunday-school—right away, let's begin."

So they sat down under a palm tree and Catarina hung a piece of paper on the tree. "This is the Sunday-school picture," she said; "we'll just have to *pretend*, of course." Indeed, it took quite a little pretending when there wasn't a single drawing on that entire piece of paper. But Catarina laid her finger on a certain spot and said: "Now, here's where the hillside ought to be. And all over the hillside you must make believe that there are sheep, huddled together, sound asleep. Shepherds are sitting here, and it's night. It's ever and ever so dark, until suddenly up in this corner of the picture there is a big light, right here in the sky, and now what do you suppose made that light?"

Not a single little Porto Rican knew, so Catarina whispered: "Why, it was *angels*, oh, a whole lot of angels, and they came down to tell the shepherds that the Lord Jesus was born."

"Who is this Lord Jesus?" a little girl asked, so Catarina explained. And *that* was her first story!

"We like finger stories," the children cried. "Tell us another."

So Catarina told story after story—the very ones you like best yourself—about Three Wise Men who came over the desert on camels with presents for the little Lord Jesus; about how the Lord Jesus fed five thousand people from what was in the lunch-basket of one surprised little boy; about how the Lord Jesus healed the sick at sunset time—and so through all her nine fingers, a story for each. There came a time when she had told them so often that almost any little Filipino child could tell which story belonged on

which finger! The first they called her Angel Finger, the next her Wise Men Finger, the next her Lunch-Basket Finger, the next her Sick Finger, etc., nine of them. But always there was Catarina's empty little tenth finger that had no story at all!

Then one day our missionaries came to that town, and no sooner had Mrs. Missionary started telling the Bible stories to the women and children than a certain small boy named Alfonso cried: "Oh, that's Catarina's sixth finger, Señora!" Of course Mrs. Missionary could not imagine what he was talking about, so she started to tell another story, when a small, excited girl called out: "Señora, Señora, we know how it ends, for it's Catarina's fourth finger."

So *then* Mrs. Missionary stopped and asked: "Who is Catarina? And what about her fingers?"

Whereupon Catarina came shyly forward and, holding up her hands, said: "I have nine Bible fingers, Señora, but alas, my tenth finger is empty."

Yet when Mrs. Missionary heard all that Catarina had done in that town she saw that Catarina's tenth finger had been a Bible story all by itself, for perhaps you will remember that just before the Lord Jesus went back to Heaven He said to His friends: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." And Mrs. Missionary thought that Catarina had obeyed this command about as well as any little girl could do, for the moment she moved into the new village hadn't she begun spreading the story of Jesus? Indeed, it makes me wonder whether you and I are remembering to use our fingers for the Lord Jesus, too!

STRAIGHT FROM HEAVEN TO TEOFILO

DANNY'S mother stood in the doorway, silently watching him. Finally she said: "Danny, what *are* you doing?"

"Now, Mumsy," begged Danny with his politest do-please-let-me-alone manner, "it's just because I'm brimful of a brand-new secret,—honest Injun, I can't tell what it is yet! Only from now on you and Dad aren't the only missionaries in Cuba—there's *me*, too!"

"You're no sort of a missionary to use grammar like that," she laughed. Then more seriously: "Are you writing letters home to America, perhaps?"

"Oh, Mumsy!" he pleaded, "I do so awfully want not to tell. Yet when you look at me with that twinkle I'm sure to let it pop out. I'll just say this—it's a 'safe and sane' secret!"

"All right," she laughed, leaving the room, "I'll not worm it out of you, dear. *Only mind you don't get into trouble.*"

Danny sighed. That's all she thought about, poor dear: keeping people out of trouble. Didn't every one in town keep coming to their house in order that Mumsy could get them nicely smoothed out

again? Well, he wouldn't add himself to the number, for being an angel couldn't prove *very* dangerous business, surely!

Probably you are wondering whatever started Danny in the angel service since he had seen Teofilo turn the leaves!

It began that morning when Danny was playing bear all by himself behind the sitting-room sofa, which made a marvellous den. Some one had come softly shuffling into the room, so Danny stood up on his hind legs, as any trained bear would do, and was about to give a gruff, surly growl to frighten his mother, when, behold, it was not his mother at all, but Teofilo. And Danny knew that Teofilo was not supposed to come into the house at all; his job was in the garden, planting and raking and weeding.

Yet here was Teofilo shuffling slyly across the room, where he picked up a book, slipped it under his belt, and hurriedly shuffled away.

"Dear me!" groaned Danny, "he's a thief! I'd better play detective on him right away, for Mumsy won't like Teofilo's stealing things, when she's trying so hard to reform him."

So, like any model detective, Danny followed his thief on tiptoe out into the garden, and skulked behind a clump of bushes, watching Teofilo turn the leaves of the book he had stolen. Danny had never seen any one turn pages quite so fast. "Whatever makes him *turn* all the time, why doesn't he read it?"

Then, for a thief, Teofilo did an astonishing thing. He fell on his knees, closed his eyes, and prayed: "Oh, God, you saw me steal this Bible. You know

I didn't have any money to buy one; but, oh, Lord, the print is too small for me to read; you know what dim old eyes I have. I've turned every page, but I can't find any letters big enough for a stupid old peasant man who has only just learned his A B C's. Oh, Lord, couldn't you get one of your angels to drop me down a Bible in print as big as you have it; just a page at a time would do, Lord, if you're busy now. I'm here in the missionary's garden. Amen."

Danny walked slowly into the house, thinking it over. What, oh what, did God do with peculiar prayers like this? Did He really have some special angel all ready to drop a nice big primer Bible into their garden for Teofilo? Danny couldn't help but worry about it—for instance, would that angel surely remember to send a *Spanish* Bible? Somehow he always thought of God and the angels as talking English; but, of course, that was not true. Naturally, God knew every single language that there was in the world. But were the angels as wise? Supposing this particular angel carelessly dropped an English Bible—oh, poor, poor Teofilo!

Danny walked out to meet his father.

"Listen, Dad," he began, "if anybody I know prays a prayer and wants an angel to do something very, very unusual for angels to do, do you think I ought to wait and see whether the angel makes good, or should I answer the prayer myself?"

Danny's missionary father looked into Danny's sober face. "If it's something you can do, probably you're to be the angel yourself, Danny. Of course, I don't know what you really mean."

"No," said Danny quietly, "I've got to keep it a secret." So after luncheon he went up to his room and began copying a Spanish Gospel of Mark in great, square, black letters, printed side by side exactly as children's primers ought to look. Perhaps you do not realize that of all the four gospels Mark is by far the shortest, and as Danny said to himself: "I may be an old, old man before I get the whole Bible copied, so I'd better begin with the littlest book; Matthew and Luke tell almost the same stories, only they aren't nearly as brisk about it. Mark hurries along and says 'straightway' and 'immediately' about everything that Jesus does."

After several pages were done, Danny crept from the house and went cautiously into the garden. Teofilo was way off in the vegetable patch, so Danny hid the carefully-copied pages under Teofilo's old straw hat. Never before had his heart pitty-patted quite so fast, and he was disappointed that supper came before he could watch Teofilo find the surprise.

After that Danny printed a few pages of Mark's Gospel every day, secretly hiding them in the garden when Teofilo was out of sight. And this kept up for several days, until one evening, when his mother said:

"Henry, I wonder if there was ever a town as superstitious as this one? Imagine the utterly absurd news I heard to-day; positively everybody in town believes it, too—that an angel actually comes down from heaven every single day to visit our garden and leave part of the Bible in great big letters, large enough for Teofilo to read. Of all superstitious stories! I was so upset that I came straight home

and gave Teofilo a good scolding for spreading such perfect nonsense among the peasants, and would you believe it, but the poor old fellow insists that it is true! He says he prayed for a Bible like that, and that the good God answered his prayer. Henry, dear, his eyes simply *shine*, he is so convinced about it, and he loves the Bible so much that after all these years of unwillingness he wants to join the church at once. And his uncle, Padre Augustino, the Catholic priest, who has always been so bitter against Protestants, is so stunned by this angel visitation that he has become curious enough to read the Bible through—not Teofilo's daily installments, but a real Bible, and his heart is all awakened. Indeed, every one in the village is so interested in his attitude that they want Bibles. It's rather wonderful in one way, you see, all but that angel superstition. What *will* you do about it?"

Danny's father looked at Danny, and Danny looked at his father.

"I think," said Danny's father slowly, "that Danny may have to make a little speech in meeting next Sunday morning. How about it, Danny?"

Danny sighed. "I just knew I wasn't cut out to be an angel for long. It's dangerous business, after all, isn't it?"

Danny's mother looked at him in utter surprise. "Why, Danny dear," she cried, "were you the angel? Oh, then, I'm sure everything will turn out all right; don't you think so, Henry?"

And Danny's father nodded his head proudly.

THE WESTERNERS

XXIII

THE FAIRY WITH WHISKERS

IT was the ugliest little town in the whole United States; indeed it was! With the muddiest of unpaved Main Streets, lined by small, unpainted stores and a straggling row of uninviting houses. All around that town were oil wells—places where men are toiling day and night to get us gasoline to run our motor-trucks and autos, kerosene to light our lamps, naphtha and benzine to clean our clothes, vaseline to heal our sores, not to mention half a dozen other things which crude oil gives us.

Just a short step out from town the road began to climb a hill, the hill began to show some trees, the trees began to veil a lane, the lane began to near the house, and—like the old woman's pig—you are now over the stile and indoors, where Thelma Thor, a small Norwegian maiden, is suffering with a cold in her head, the perfectly horrid sniffy kind with a cough attached that made the doctor say, "Now, my dear, you'll be all right if you'll stay quietly in the house a few days." So Miss Shut-in did as he asked, but she sighed and she groaned about it, for it was quite the most inconvenient time of the year to be shut in, since Eåster was day after to-morrow, and

oh dear! oh dear! she did so want to have the beautiful new Easter bonnet.

She got out both of last year's straw hats, but they looked too old-fashioned for words. The truth of the matter is that they had also been her hats the year before that too. Hats just can't go on being stylish forever.

"Oh, for a fairy godmother," sobbed Miss Shut-in, weeping over the ugliness of them. "I bane wanting to l-look p-pretty." She hid her head on the table. And her cold was worse than ever.

Just then there was a knock at the door. Now who could it possibly be at this late hour in the afternoon? Grocer? postman? or—oh, amusing thought, the fairy she had just wished for? But no, she opened the door, and it wasn't a fairy, for who ever heard of a fairy with whiskers? Still she had to admit his visit both began and ended differently from any other visit—perhaps there *were* gentlemen fairies, after all!

"How do you do?" said this Almost-a-Fairy person. "You don't look at all as if you were the lady of the house. Are you?"

"But I bane," said Thelma Thor solemnly. "I bane twelve, and there's no other lady in this house but me, since mother died. And that was years ago."

"I see," said the Almost-a-Fairy gently. "And you've been crying about something, haven't you? I wonder if I could help you. That's my business, helping."

Miss Shut-in smiled an April smile through her

tears. "I bane afraid you couldn't do much unless you bane a fairy; for it bane a hat, sir—an Easter hat."

"Really?" laughed the Almost-a-Fairy; "and what may you be crying over an Easter hat for?"

Miss Shut-in sniffed. "Oh, I wanted to look p-pretty, Easter."

"Fine! fine!" said the Almost-a-Fairy. "It's a good sign to find any one so young planning to adorn the church and make Christianity attractive."

Thelma simply stared.

"Oh, but I bane going to do it to adorn *myself*, for I never go to church no more, not since mother died."

"Oh!" said the A. A. F. Then he picked up the two hats and twirled them around on his fingers. "This is the better hat, of course; but there's one nice rose on this other hat. Now let me rip this off and hold it over this worn place. Look! isn't that fetching? It's no trick at all. Milliners just twirl hats around;—zip! then on goes a flower and up goes the price."

Miss Shut-in stared at her hat in a fascinated way. "It bane lovely," she admitted. "You bane some fairy—altogether one—not the *almost* kind. I guess millinery bane your business, yes?"

He laughed. "*Adorning* is my business; helping people to adorn the gospel. I hoped you were planning to do that with this hat, perhaps."

Thelma squirmed uncomfortably. "I ban't aiming to adorn anything but myself. I bane going to walk up and down Main Street and have people ad-

mire my hat. I really wouldn't know how to adorn the g-gospel with flowers and garlands. Oh, you got a book of directions?"

For even as the Altogether-a-Fairy was looping a bit of ribbon around the crown, he whisked a book out of his pocket and opened it. "Yes, here are all the rules," he said, and Thelma was amazed to see a Bible.

"Of all things!" she cried.

"In all things," he corrected her, and opened his Bible to the book of Titus, "Adorn the gospel of Christ our Saviour *in all things*."

"And how bane one little girl go to work to adorn the gospel?" she asked.

He turned the pages until he found the Book of Timothy, then he read:

"'In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel . . . not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, *but with good works*.' You see?"

Miss Shut-in smiled. "That bane one cheap, easy way to adorn anything, for *good works* ban't nearly so expensive as those just grand hats they got downtown in stores."

"Maybe not," the Fairy-with-Whiskers said; "and then again maybe it would be even more expensive. Certain it is that the Bible tells me that the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is of great price in the sight of the Lord. I'm wondering if you wouldn't like to buy a Bible now, and read this for yourself."

Miss Shut-in dimpled. "Now I know you bane a fairy what sells Bibles, ban't you, so people will

adorn their hearts? Well, I love to buy one, sir, for our only Bible bane so big and heavy, and the print so fine, that all we ever do bane dust the outside of it once a year up on the top shelf in the bookcase."

"Dear me!" sighed the Fairy and pulled his whiskers sadly. "Yet there are six million people in America who haven't a Bible even on their top shelves. Won't you buy one, my dear?"

"I'd like to, but I got so little money, and I need new Easter shoes dreadfully."

"More adornment," he laughed. "Didn't you know that the Bible says, 'How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things'? You can easily start adorning your feet that way. In fact, this all makes me think of one of my favorite poems—listen:

"Some folks in *looks* take so much pride
They don't think much on what's inside.
Well, as for me, I know my face
Can ne'er be made a thing of grace,
And so I rather think I'll see
How I can fix th' inside of me,
So folks'll say, 'He looks like sin,
But ain't he beautiful within?'"

Thelma Thor grinned widely: "I bane going to buy me the littlest Bible you got; comes the day when I bane alone so I can read. You mark me all those beauty places,—yes?"

Of course he did: 1 Samuel 16:7; Titus 2:10; 1 Peter 3:3, 4; Proverbs 31:30 and a score of other verses showing her how she could "adorn the gospel in all things." And Thelma read that Bible

with the greatest curiosity. But best of all was Sigmund Thor, her father, a truck farmer who supplied that ugly oil town with fresh vegetables. He took the Bible just as curiously as Thelma, and one night he said: "Why for bane you stay home from church, eh? Why for you not say prayers out loud at night, eh? Why for you not give your penny to the Lord come Sundays, like you used to do? You bane a bad girl, Thelma, joost like I bane a bad man. It bane one good buy—this Book."

So it seems to me that if the Fairy-with-Whiskers can do that much good in selling one Bible, then it's a fine thing to be a colporter. Don't you agree? Especially with six million Americans without Bibles yet.

XXIV

JUST MITHER

LONG years ago Mither came to town,—
Mither MacCarthy, as I'm sure you've
guessed. And not one of all the nice ladies
in town was aware that there was a new neighbor—
not one!

So Mither had it all to do alone. And there was
a *lot* to do, for the corners were so full of cobwebs,
the floors so gritty and the window-panes so smutty
that not a place in all that house was fit for even
Mither's cat to look at. Ah me, what scrubbings
went on—what scourings—what polishings—before
ever that little house, which had been nobody's for
years on end, became all Mither's own, and as clean
as a whistle! But during all the broiling days of
cleaning, I would be reminding you that not a neigh-
bor came to the door with a bit of a pie for the
youngsters to eat while Mither was too busy to dish
up fancies—no, not a neighbor. So Mither whis-
pered to herself in the cool of the evening when she
rested idly on the doorstep: "Sure, and I've maybe
moved into a town of frozen icicles!"

But all this time the neighbors were saying: "Just
a poor Scotch-Irish body she is, with a whole raft
of children and no husband living. I take it she'll
find it right hard to make ends meet."

And she did, too. But the little house that had been nobody's for years on end was now not only spotless *inside*, but outside jolly gay geraniums flanked the front doorsteps; and perhaps you've noticed yourself that a "whole raft of children" make very good gardeners. So soft green grass sprang up and was always neatly cut, and vegetables in astonishingly straight rows began to make the MacCarthy mouths water, and the zinnias grew as big as apples. Oh, it was a dear little bit of a home that Mither made out of the dingy house that had been nobody's for years on end!

But that "raft of children" who had been looking forward all their young lives to the day when we "flit to the country for good-and-all" decided that a village of icicles was a poor substitute for the city block of houses where Mither was heartily hailed from every doorstep.

"Tut!" she reprimanded them, "ye've gone fair daft in yere heads, Biddy and Andy and wee MacGregor; I'll be asking you to clench yer teeth on such remarks; for what's one poor widow-woman more nor less in a neat little village all self-satisfied like this? Aye, just a poor blue gingham apron widow like meself. Tut! Are ye expectin' for the band to be meetin' in front to serenade me, and for the mayor hisself to be makin' a grand speech? 'Tis fair silly ye are! And now, if ye'll fetch yer bits of cushions out onto the doorsteps I'll be readin' ye from yere faither's auld Scots Bible, like he used to be doin' hisself, five wee months ago."

So there was a clatter of little feet, then the cush-

ions were placed side by side facing the sunset glow and their new village home—Bridget and Andrew and MacGregor MacCarthy, their eyes like saucers as Mither read the dear quaint words: "Tak tent that ye lichtlie—no ane o' thir wee anes; for say I t'ye that in Heeven their ain Angels aye look upon my Heevenlie Faither's face! For the Son o' Man has come to save thae war lost.

"Noo, hoo think ye, yersels? Gin a man hae a hunner sheep, and ane o' them is gane awa, dis he no lea' the ninety-and-nine, and gang intil the mountains, seeking the ane forwander't? And gin sae be that he lights on't, truly say I t' ye, he is blyther ower that sheep than ower the ninety-and-nine that gaed-no awa. E'en sae, thar is nae desire afore yere Faither in Heeven that ane o' thir wee anes soud be lost."

When she finished every wee MacCarthy knew that Mither was like that herself, looking out for others, —and they went to bed contented. As for Mither herself, she locked up her loneliness inside the yoke of her old gingham frock. "Poof!" she whispered, "I'll not be fretting for the bit of slight I've had!"

But this she did: she bided her time; and when news went the rounds that strangers were moving to town, she armed each wee MacCarthy with a pail or a broom and a scrubbing brush, and into that empty house she marched like an army to scour and to polish the worst of the dirt; while the "raft of children" weeded the front yard. And when the astonished new family moved into this spotless abode, there would be Andy MacCarthy a while later

on the doorstep saying: "How do ye do? And if ye please, Mither says to tell ye as how the first days in a new house is always to sixes and sevens, anyhow, so she's just sent ye over this wee bit of a pie to knock the edge off yere appetites—and, that's all, so I'll just be going along home, thank ye kindly. Good-bye!"

All in one breath he said it, too, with his eyes peering curiously through the doorway to discover playmates his own size.

But his dear brown freckles and his breathless remarks made the warmest kind of a spot in the stranger's heart. And Mither soon had a new friend, you see! For in even the smallest of towns people *do* keep moving in; and Mither was always in their homes before them "spicking and spanning things up," as the wee MacCarthys called it. And sometimes, in the spring of the year, they planted a few little seeds in these new neighbors' garden beds—all their own idea this was. "We'll be springing a bit of a surprise, ourselves!" they laughed in secret, until the neighbors came to see that the warm friendliness of Mither had become contagious—an heirloom to her "raft of children"!

Also, if any one were sick, on went Mither's sun-bonnet as she trudged to carry jellies to the invalid and to sympathize, her whole Scotch-Irish face aglow with feeling.

So, as the years went by, the wee MacCarthys lengthened out to big MacCarthys, and Biddy came to teach the village school while Andy was the village preacher—and a fine preacher he made, too;

thundering one moment, tender as kind tears the next. All the wee children in town were Andy's shadows: "Sure, ye're the Pied Piper of Hamelin himself," laughed Mither, teasing him.

"It might be worse, ye will admit," said Andy, kissing her.

As for MacGregor MacCarthy, he farmed the pleasant acres Mither had bought, bit by bit, in the rear of the dingy old house that had once been nobody's for long years on end. And MacGregor was a farmer that *was* a farmer. Also, a tenth of his grain and a tenth of his fruit and a tenth of his eggs he gave to Mither to spend in the Lord's work; so that Mither, who had once given only her poor widow's mite, felt almost like some Mrs. Vanderbilt.

Well, in the course of time Mither grew to be seventy-five years old. Yes, that she did! And it is a great many years to have lived. So the village gave her a surprise party. There were men and women there whose floors she had scrubbed with her own hands before ever they moved to town, and they felt quite rightly that nothing but a kiss on Mither's withered cheek could thank her half enough; and one pretty high school girl cried softly: "Oh, I'd rather be '*just Mither*' than the most beautiful lady in the whole wide world!"

"See here," said Andy in his mellow, pleasant voice, "what's to hinder ye from being Mither yerself? Just *begin*! Just *be* Mither, lassie! All ye've got to do is to care for some one else as much as ye care for yerself in homely every-day bits of work. That's Mither!"

And I'm thinking that Home missions is spreading
just that self-same spirit round the town: loving
your next-door neighbors as hard as ever you love
yourself, like this poem they read to Mither on her
birthday:

TOUCHING SHOULDERS

There's a comforting thought at the close of the day,
When I'm weary and lonely and sad,
That sort of grips hold of my crusty old heart,
And bids it be merry and glad;
It gets in my soul and it drives out the blues,
And finally thrills through and through—
It is just a sweet memory that chants the refrain:
'I'm glad I touched shoulders with you!'

Did you know you were brave? Did you know you
were strong?

Did you know there was one leaning hard?

Did you know that I waited and listened and prayed,
And was cheered by your simplest word?

Did you know that I longed for that smile on your
face,

For the sound of your voice ringing true?

Did you know I grew stronger and better, because
I had merely touched shoulders with you?

I am glad that I live, that I battle and strive

For the place that I know I must fill;

I am thankful for sorrows—I'll meet with a grin

What fortune may send—good or ill.

I may not have wealth, I may not be great

But I know I shall always be true,

For I have in my life that courage you gave

When once I rubbed shoulders with you!

THE REST OF US

XXV

SING A SONG OF SIXPENCE

OF course it was partly the Easter music and partly the Easter sermon and partly the scent of the lovely Easter flowers, but however it came about, the truth of the matter is that while Alice sat primly in church between her father and mother that Easter Sunday morning, she did an astonishing thing; she never knew how it could have happened without any one noticing her, for no sooner had she put her head against her father's shoulder than she suddenly found herself walking and walking and walking through marvellous fields of Easter lilies; up and up she climbed until she even reached the golden gates of heaven. She looked inside wistfully, then noticing that others were allowed to walk in, she said to the Angel at the gate: "Could I go in, too, please?"

"Oh, you're Alice in Blunderland, aren't you?" the Angel said, turning around. "Wait a moment, dear, till I see if your name is in the King's Book of Golden Deeds."

Alice knew, almost before the Angel looked, that her name was not on the list—and it wasn't.

"I'm sorry," sighed the Angel, "but of course you understand that it would not be fair to let you enjoy all the glory inside when you really had done nothing to help."

Alice felt very much surprised. "But what could a young girl like me do? I'm not quite twelve yet. And whatever made you call me Alice in *Blunderland*? Do—do I s-seem to have made so many b-blunders?"

"I'm afraid you have, for all the entries in the Book of Golden Deeds are on the Blunderland side instead of the Wonderland side. So many children live, and grow up, and *die* in Blunderland without once playing 'Tag! You're It!'"

Alice simply stared. "Well, if that's all, I think you ought to know that I perfectly *love* to play that game, dear Angel; I play it day after day after day."

The Angel seemed really startled and searched again through all the records. "There is no littlest mention of your having played the kind of game I mean, no, not even once!"

"But what kind *can* you mean?" Alice asked, almost crossly. Of course, if they had their own special kind, how was she to know she ought to play it?

"It's exactly like any other game of tag, my dear; the minute you are *touched*, then Tag! you're it! and you must hurry and touch some one else. But I find that in Blunderland men, women, and children who are touched stand perfectly still and say to each other: 'I've been touched! Oh, surely nobody is so easily touched as I am!' But *they never budge one*

single inch to touch anybody else. So it's these stand-still-do-nothing, keep-everything-for-themselves people in Blunderland who are continually spoiling God's beautiful plan for Next-Door Neighbors."

Alice looked at the Angel eagerly: "But maybe I'm not nearly so bad as you think, for maybe I've never been *touched!*"

"Oh, but you have!" cried the Angel, "it's down here on the records. Let me see,—one, two . . . five . . . eight . . . oh, fully a dozen times you have been touched by stories of these neighbors."

"Have I?" sighed Alice in a small meek voice.

"Yes, dear; don't you remember being touched about little Hop-o'-My-Thumb who picked string beans for you one summer? And about Tiptoe Tessa's making Easter roses for new bonnets? And oh, but you were touched about Olga Robsa's starch-box garden: you were going to send her more seeds right away——"

"So I was!" Alice admitted, "but I even forgot to tell mother. I've blundered a good deal, I guess. Yet I *meant all right*; I'm wondering, was I ever touched again when I stood still and wouldn't be 'It'?"

"Oh, yes. There was the story called 'Just Mither.' You whispered to yourself: 'I'll be a neighbor like those wee MacCarthys, myself'; and as for Little Squaw-Laugh-at-the-Sky you said: 'I'll send a Christmas package all my very own to the lonest missionary there is!' Then later on, when it came to people who never saw a Bible before, oh,

you were so touched and declared nothing in the world would be quite so wonderful as sending Bibles to some of your six million neighbors who never yet had owned one ——”

Alice remembered perfectly.

“*But you stood still,*” the Angel said, closing the King’s Book of Golden Deeds.

“I wonder,” Alice timidly began, “I wonder how a little girl like me can play this game of Tag, dear Angel. I don’t know enough to be a missionary to go and touch these people, I’m really hardly old enough to leave home.”

“Very true,” smiled the Angel, “but surely, like God’s other stay-at-homes, you could Sing a Song of Sixpence!”

“But I’ve never sung in public in my life,” gasped Alice, turning pale. “What does this song sound like?”

“Oh, the cheerfullest little clinking tinkling tune that ever was; you can fairly *hear* the Christian nickels, dimes and quarters piling up into neat stacks of silver dollars, preparing to rush out and touch all next-door neighbors. *Any* one can sing this song; just open your pocketbook wide and it almost sings itself. The refrain is lovely, too, for every verse ends with the words:

“THE LORD LOVETH A CHEERFUL GIVER.”

Alice simply beamed: “I never guessed you could play Tag with *money*! Did you know that down in Blunderland I have a little tin bank on my bureau simply bursting with dimes and quarters this very

minute? I only wish I knew what dollars do for neighbors——”

The Angel opened a little book where Alice read a lengthy list:

“1. Salarie\$ for missionaries everywhere begin and end with Christian dollars.

“2. Ship\$ and Sail\$ and Steam-car\$ to carry them to their mission fields begin and end with Christian dollars.

“3. Saddle\$ and Sled\$, Surrey\$ and Swift motor\$ to take them round their mission stations begin and end with Christian dollars.

“4. School\$ and Scholar\$hip\$, Slate\$ and Study-book\$, Seat\$ and Scissor\$ all begin and end with Christian dollars.

“5. Sicknesse\$ and Surgeon\$, Stretcher\$ and Splint\$, Sponge\$ and Spray\$, Soap\$ and Soup\$, Sheet\$ and Supplie\$ for every Christian hospital begin and end with Christian dollars.

“6. Shoe\$ and Sock\$, Shirt\$ and Skirt\$ for little orphan children begin and end with Christian dollars.

“7. Swing\$ and Shower-bath\$, Sewing-classe\$ and Scissor\$, Shutter\$ and Sidewalk\$ and Step\$ on Christian Centers all begin and end with Christian dollars.

“8. Scripture\$ and Scroll\$, Song-book\$ and Service\$ in Christian missions begin and end with Christian dollars.

“9. Seed\$ and Spade\$ and Small \$lum-garden\$ begin and end with Christian dollars.”

“Well, I can plainly see,” said Alice, “that when you \$ing a Song of \$ixpence you simply can’t help touching some one else!”

“Sh! Sh!” her father whispered in her ear, ut-

terly scandalized; "don't talk out loud, dear!" Whereupon Alice opened her astonished eyes and found herself in church, in her own pew, cuddled up next to her father. . . .

"For goodness' sake," said Alice to herself, "it must have been a *dream*." Yet how exceedingly real it had seemed, how horrid and how blundering she had felt as the Angel's gentle eyes had looked her up and down: Alice in Blunderland, the slow-poke stand-still girl who never played God's game of Tag! You're It!

By now, of course, she's moved from Blunderland forever, and is saying to each Christian boy and girl to-day: "I've touched you, so do \$ing a \$ong of \$ixpence right away!"

XXVI

PLEASE DO NOT OPEN TILL CHRISTMAS

ONCE upon a time there was a Little Old Lady from Holland. And once upon the same time there was a Sunday-school class, —in fact, two of them. As for the time itself, it was the day before Christmas, with fluffy flakes of snow in the air, and the *klinkle-klank* of sleigh bells. There was the spicy smell of Christmas trees and the terrible bustling of worried people who had foolishly forgotten to do their shopping early. And the Little Old Lady was provoked at them.

"It's even worse this year than usual," she said to the Minister's Daughter when she came to the handkerchief counter to make the very last purchase on her list.

"We're a shameless, thoughtless lot of Christians," sighed the Minister's Daughter, "and I do hope we won't tire you out so you can't enjoy your Christmas to-morrow."

The Little Old Lady handed the package over the counter as she answered: "Oh, as for Christmas, I pretend there isn't any such day any more."

"No such day as Christmas? Why, you sound like a heathen," gasped the Minister's Daughter; "what *do* you mean?"

"Well, for one thing, I'm always clean tuckered out by Christmas Eve. You see I'm getting old, my

dear, and then somehow—well—my boys aren't living any more, and Christmas isn't Christmas in a flat with no family and no presents. So to-night I'll probably do what I did last year, just creep home when the store closes at half-past nine and crawl into bed in the dark. It's easier to pretend things are like they used to be when the lights aren't on!"

The Minister's Daughter leaned over the counter and laid her hand on the Little Old Lady's. "Oh, I'm so sorry, so very, very sorry!" she said, and wanted to cry dreadfully. Only of course it wouldn't have been the proper thing to do, at all. So instead of crying she had a sudden Idea, with a big capital "I"! She simply flew out of the store, as if there had not been several hundred bustling people with arms full of bundles. She even forgot to mind standing up in the street-car, for the Idea was so perfectly delightful it was like fairy wishes coming true, with herself as the fairy godmother.

When she reached home she sat down and telephoned to so many persons that finally the Girl-at-Central "listened in" on one conversation,—and smiled all the rest of the day. So you may be sure she approved of the scheme she overheard.

Christmas Eve the snow was fluffier than ever, and the Minister decided all of it had been tramped into his front hall by those jolly laughing boys and girls. But he loved it, because there was Christmas in the air, and Christmas in their hearts.

Then the Minister's Daughter suddenly looked at her watch. "Oh, my dears, it's high time we were off," she called; "remember she leaves the store at

half-past nine. Come on!" So they hurried away, each with a chunky parcel.

And the fairy story began.

It was a dingy little room, but they did things to it, working fast as fairies must before mortals can burst in and find them busy. Then they turned out the gas, tiptoed out, and scampered across the street to a drug-store for hot chocolate. Just the Minister's Daughter and the Deacon's Son paced up and down outside, trying to look each time as if they were arriving anew, instead of killing time.

Presently the Little Old Lady from Holland came into view, so tired that she shuffled her poor Dutch feet through the snow. And right at her own doorstep who should she see coming towards her but her nice Minister's nice daughter, recently engaged to the Deacon's son.

"Imagine seeing you twice in one day, my dear," she said.

The Deacon's Son nudged the Minister's Daughter, for the scheme had worked! The dear old soul evidently thought it had all just happened, so the Minister's Daughter said: "As long as we *have* met, I'm going to give you a good-night kiss," and she popped it right on the Old Lady's cheek where the snow-drops were melting.

"Oh, thank you! Thank you!" she cried happily; and although that was all that the Minister's Daughter had waited outside for, the Deacon's Son had an extra idea of his own.

"I've a good mind to give you a kiss myself," he exclaimed. So he did! On the *other* cheek.

"Bless me!" sighed the Little Old Lady, "I'm all aflutter. I'll surely sleep well this night, my dears. God bless you both and make you happy. Good-night—and a merry Christmas."

When the front door had shut the Minister's Daughter said, "Oh, I *do* hope she won't light the gas!"

The Deacon's Son fairly glued his eye on the second-story window: "I'm pretty sure she won't, she doesn't usually; and if she hasn't been kissing anybody in a long time, she'll surely want to think about it in the dark."

The Minister's Daughter wanted to laugh because he sounded so wondrous wise, but she sighed instead and said: "Oh, Peter dear, I do hope you'll never be a lonely old man!"

"I hope not, dear," he answered reverently, for you will remember that they were planning to live together forever and ever.

They stood quietly watching the Old Lady's window; it remained dark; and presently it was raised a few inches, so they knew she had undressed and was ready for bed.

"I'll get the children," he said, and ran over to the drug-store.

"Come along, Herald Angels," he called, "if you swallow any more hot chocolate you won't be able to warble properly!" So they wrapped themselves in mufflers and trooped out into the scrunchy snow.

"Quiet now!" ordered the Deacon's Son, "remember you're angels and are to sing that tired old Darling to sleep."

So they tiptoed across to her house, and through the open crack of her window there floated: "Holy Night, Silent Night," sounding as it only can sound when sixteen young hearts are brimming over with Christmas love for somebody else.

The Little Old Lady lay in bed and loved it. "Am I dreaming, or is it real?" she wondered,—and seemed to feel those two warm kisses on her cheeks all over again. But by the third verse she had actually snoozed right off into a dream of Holland, so the rest of their carols interested only the neighbors, who smiled to hear some of the Herald Angels break down forlornly on the high notes of their fifth hymn.

"Perhaps we'd better go now," said the Minister's Daughter. And the angels one and all agreed, for they were getting chilly and sleepy. But they liked it, for Christmas was in the air.

Presently the Minister's Daughter had kissed all *her* angels good-night, and the Deacon's Son had slapped all *his* angels on the back. And the wise old Man in the Moon chuckled to himself, for Christmas comes only once in a year, and he liked what they had been up to!

The sun liked it, too, and was really impatient at the Little Old Lady the next morning—was she *never* going to wake up? Finally he sent a sunbeam to dance on her eyelids, whereat she sighed and *half* woke up. "It's funny," she thought to herself, "but I never pretended to smell pine boughs so plainly before. I'm getting good at pretending!" But the sunbeam kept on dancing until she squinted

through her eyelashes, and was presently sitting bolt upright in bed.

"But, of course, it's just a dream," she cautioned herself wisely. Yet there was her table loaded down with giddy red packages, every single one of which was plainly labelled: "Please Do Not Open Till Christmas."

"Well, it's Christmas this very minute, and I'd better open them quick before I wake up altogether"; so she snipped the string off the first package. Well! well! oranges—how very long ago it was since she had had any! And dear me, what a lovely padded jacket to go under her thin winter coat—oh, if only that jacket would not vanish into thin air when she actually woke up! And my! my! what a beautiful work-bag; oh, how nice! two balls of red yarn inside, also some knitting needles, with this note: "Johnnie Tucker needs some mittens. He is seven years old. You'll know what size to knit him."

"I'd best cast on twenty stitches," she decided at once, thinking how odd it was to receive dream notes that crinkled like real paper.

She had a marvellous half hour; for there was a box of hard candies, the kind that last a long time because you're only supposed to suck and suck on them; there were two books, and a dainty lace collar; there was a pound of tea and a nice little cup and saucer to drink it out of; there was a tiny Christmas tree with all sorts of cute presents dangling from every bough—a tiny pencil, a candy cane, a package of silvery wire hairpins (to match white

hair!), a small calendar, a little bottle of cologne, a crocheted wash-cloth — oh, ever so many other things, and among them a handkerchief which had actually come off her very own counter at the store. She remembered selling one yesterday.

It was that handkerchief which made her pinch herself to see if she was awake. *And she was!* So she began putting two and two together: the handkerchief and the Minister's Daughter; the Deacon's Son and the good-night kisses; the Christmas carols and all these surprisingly real presents. Certainly nothing like this had ever happened before.

"The sweet young things!" she smiled. "Dear God, how very good you are to me!"

So it was a wonderful morning; and in the afternoon *they* came. They found her sucking pleasantly on a hard candy and knitting Johnnie Tucker's mittens. They played quaint old games with her,—Twenty Questions and Hide the Thimble; and they admired her presents one by one as if they had never seen them before.

"It's been my merriest Christmas," she whispered to each of them as they kissed her good-bye. Whereupon every single one of them answered: "Why, it's been my happiest Christmas, too!"

And I can't resist telling you that there's a lonely old Lady in your church. I'm sure you want to have the merriest Christmas possible, so I'm hinting to you how you can find it:—tuck it inside her package and label it: "Please Do Not Open Till Christmas!"

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